

Practical Christianity:
Or, an Account of the
HOLINESS
WHICH THE
Gospel Enjoins,

WITH
The MOTIVES to it, and the
REMEDIES it proposes against
TEMPTATIONS.

WITH A
P R A Y E R
Concluding each distinct Head.

By *R. Lucas D. D.* Vicar of St. Stephen's
in Colemanstreet.

The Fourth Edition.

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Mary

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TO THE
READER

Reader,

I Have endeavour'd in this following Discourse, to endear Holiness to the Love and Practice of Mankind; which is a design neither so trifling nor criminal as to stand in need of an excuse.

But because a very worthy design may miscarry in the Contrivance and method of its prosecution,

A 2

tion,

To the Reader.

tion, therefore I think my self oblig'd to give you some account of that; which is thus: I have endeavour'd to represent Religion in its true and natural Character, purified from the sensual Freedoms which some, and the fran-tick and conceited Whimsies which others deform it by: I have propos'd the glorious Motives to Holiness, and the powerful Remedies against Temptation which it contains. I have perform'd this as near as I could, in an easie Method and familiar Style; I have not Intermixt either Fancy or Passion, which seems to me too light and garish a dress for Divine thoughts, but writ them in as natural a plainness and Maje-sty as I could give them, hoping all

To the Reader.

all from the Conquering power and influence of clear truth, and therefore it will be necessary, to him who shall design any advantage to himself from this Treatise, to read it deliberately, and allow each Sentence a proper Consideration; for being forc'd to crowd many Truths into a narrow compass, I have wove the matter a little closer, and chose a conciser Style, than otherwise I should have done; and therefore do not expect to be betray'd by me into a wise Love of Religion at unawares, or to be heated into a Romantick Passion for Virtue, the former is impossible, and the latter of little use; but if you bring an honest and attentive mind, I hope you may find something in this Discourse which may

A 3 be

To the Reader.

be of very important service to your
Soul. And besides this, I had one
inducement more to the Publica-
tion of this Treatise; that is, I
am sufficiently assur'd that no kind
of Discourses contribute more to the
peace and welfare of Church and
State than those practical ones,
which aim at implanting real good-
ness in the minds of Men; for
the want of this goodness is it
which hath betray'd us into Er-
rors so numerous and so fatal to
the publick Peace, and Charity,
and to the very vitals of Religion;
for if our minds were possess'd with
that Charity, and Meekness, and
true Zeal for the Divine Glory,
which becomes Christians, we
should consider more calmly, and
see more clearly, and act more
sincerely;

To the Reader.

sincerely ; we shall discern a more manifest contradiction to Religion in those unnatural Feuds, which are carried on by so much passion in such irreligious methods, and made use of to such unchristian purposes, than in any thing, which is the subject of our contests ; and we should follow after peace by a compliance, if not to all, yet to all we could, and then I am confident we should soon put an end, if not to our Mistakes, yet to our Divisions.

If I have contributed my endeavours to this, in my degree and capacity ; I hope for Pardon, at least here, and am assur'd of a Reward hereafter. Farewell.

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Practical

Practical Christianity.

C H A P. I.

Shewing the necessity of being Religious, because the Salvation of our Souls depends on it. The nature of the Soul, and the Influence of Sin upon it in this World considered. The misery of a sinful Soul in state of Separation, the consummation of its misery after the Resurrection.

I. **W**hat is a man profited (saith our Blessed Saviour, Matt. 16. 26.) if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own Soul?

That I have in this state I am now in, *We have Souls as well as Bodies.* a Soul as well as a Body, whose interest concerns me, is a truth my own sense sufficiently discovers; for I feel Joys and Sorrows, which do not make their abode in the Organs of the Body, but in the inmost recesses of the Mind; *pains*

B and

and pleasures which Sense is too gross and heavy to partake of, as the peace or trouble of Conscience in the reflexion upon good or evil Actions, the delight or vexation of the Mind, in the contemplation of, or a fruitless inquiry after, excellent and important Truths.

*The pleasure
of the Soul of
more impor-
tance to us
than that of
the Body.*

(c 8)

2. And since I have such a Soul capable of Happiness or Misery, it naturally follows, that it were fottish and unreasonabile to lose this Soul for the gain of the whole World: For my Soul is *I myself*, and if *That* be miserable *I* must needs be so; outward circumstances of Fortune may give the World occasion to think me happy, but they can never make me so. Shall I call my self happy; if discontent and sorrow eat out the life and spirit of my Soul? if lusts and passions riot and mutiny in my bosome? if my sins scatter an uneasie shame all o'er me, and my guilt appales and frights me? What avails it me, that my rooms are stately, my tablesfull, my attendants numerous, and my attire gaudy, if all this while my very Being pines and languishes away? These indeed are rich and pleasant things, but I nevertheless

theleſ am a poor and miserable Man : Therefore I conclude , that whatever this thing be I call a Soul, though it were a perishing, dying thing, and would not out-live the Body, yet it were my wi-
dom and interest to preferr its content and satisfaction before all the World, unless I could chuse to be *miserable* and *delight* to be *unhappy*.

3. This very Consideration, suppo- *Although there
sing the uncertainty of another World,* *were no other
life.* would yet strongly engage me to the service of Religion, for all it aims at is to banish sin out of the World, which is the Source and Original of all the trou-
bles that disquiet the mind ; for, 1. Sin in its very Essence is nothing else but disordered, distempered passions, affe-
ctions foolish and preposterous in their choice, or wild and extravagant in their proportion, which our own experience sufficiently convinces us, to be painfull and uneasie. 2. It engages us in despe-
rate hazards, wearies us with daily toils, and often buries us in the ruines we bring upon our selves : and *lastly*, it fills our hearts with distrust, and fear, and shame ; for we shall never be able to perswade

our selves fully, that there is no difference between Good and Evil, that there is no God, or none that concerns himself at the Actions of this life; and if we cannot, we can never rid our selves of the pangs and stings of a troubled Conscience: we shall never be able to establish a peace and calm in our bosoms, and so enjoy our Pleasure with a clear and uninterrupted freedom. But if we could perswade our selves into the utmost height of Atheism, yet still we shall be under these two strange inconveniences. 1. That a life of Sin will be still irregular and disorderly, and therefore troublesome. 2. That we shall have dismantled our Souls of their greatest strengths, disarm'd them of that Faith, which onely can support them under the afflictions of this present Life.

Not to mention that, after all, the sad stories of another Life will not be streight-way nonsense, because we *think* them so, they will continue at least-wise disputable, and who would, but a desperate Sot, commit his Soul to such a venture!

Much more the Soul being immortal. , Sect. 2. 4. But when I consider, that the immortality of the Soul is a perswasion, which

which generally obtain'd in the Heathen World, that the more wise and vertuous any of them were, the more deeply were they possess'd by the belief and hopes of it, that the reasons *Plato*, *Cicero* and others founded this assertion in, deriv'd from the nature of the Soul, its operations, its little affinity to any visible matter, and its resemblance of the Deity, have rendred it so highly probable, that it hath shew'd a very powerful influence upon the Lives of many.

5. But especially and above all, when I consider, that the Holy Scripture, (whose Divine Authority is clear'd by as strong evidences as any matter of that nature is capable of) assures me that this Soul (whether in its *own nature* immortal or no, I'll not now examine) shall not perish in the Dissolution of this Earthly Tabernacle; as *Eccles.* 12. 7. *Then shall the dust return to the Earth as it was, and the Spirit shall return to God who gave it:* and *Matt.* 10. 28. *Fear not them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul:* (The Soul it seems is not liable to the injuries of a Disease, or the violence committed on

the Body, but doth subsist when the Body is dissolv'd into its dust:) When I consider all this, I can never so far renounce my reason, and harden my self against all the tenderness and passion I have for my self, as to be content that this Soul should be lost in that other state, provided I be fortunate and successfull in this; for what satisfaction can I then reap from a patrimony or purchase wide as the World it self, in a state wherein I shall be depriv'd of all means and opportunity of enjoyment? What can the Wealth, or Power, or Beauty of the World signifie to me, when the Body, which is the proper instrument of earthly pleasure, shall lie stark dead and cold in the Grave, shall have no passions, no appetites, nor can all the Rhetorick or wanton charms on Earth awaken in it one languishing desire or one imperfect act of Life; and as to the Soul, it must dwell in the Mansions of a new World, (far, far remote from this,) wherein every thing will be *strange, wonderfull, unalterable and eternal.*

*The wretched-
ness of a viti-
ous Soul in a
separate state.*

' But I must pursue this thought a little farther, and not stopping in the contem-

contemplation of the *uselessness* of the World after the Soul's departure from it, go on to consider the Soul in its intermediate state between Death and the Resurrection, that I may know the utmost (if I can) that the loss of a Soul imports; and here I would suppose myself surprised in the midst of gaiety and pleasures, of Love and Honour, by a violent, inexorable Disease; I resign up my dear objects, and my dotage together; I am torn from my possessions and my hopes; and when the storm hath burst the Cable, and shatter'd the Hulk of this frail Bark the Body, it casts my "Soul, that is all that remains of me, "upon an unknown strand, naked, and "poor, and desolate, without interests, "or friends, or hopes; it must dwell in "the dismal blackness of Eternal night, "and melancholy, rackt by despair and "guilt, scourg'd by shame and rage, tor- "tur'd with envy and vexation, stabb'd by "regret and repentance, not a calm and "soft, but a tempestuous and painfull one; then like some sick body, which rowls and tumbles for an easie posture, rather out of an inability to suffer pain,

" than any hope of finding rest, it sometimes languishes and looks back upon "the world vanisht like a dream, and "repeats ineffective wishes for the Body, but it shall return to its dear "Wealth and Beauty no more for ever: "Sometimes like *Dives* in the flames, "it looks towards that Region, where "Light and holy Souls do dwell, but the "unpassable gulf of the Almighty's De- "cree cuts off all hopes of that, so that "that Light onely augments its envy and "despair, and *Heaven* it self adds misery "to the wretched Soul's Hell.

This is the natural and unavoidable state of a wretched Soul, dislodg'd from the Body; despair, and rage, and shame, and guilt, and fear, and grief, and anguish, gnaw and devour the miserable Creature, and for ever must encrease, Blessed God! need there any chains to sink it lower than its own weight hath done? Needs there any other darkness cover that Soul, which such a cloud of sorrows hath benighted? Tell me no more of pleasures, these thoughts are enough to make me tremble, and grow pale at the approach of a temptation; rather

rather than my Soul should dwell in such a state a thousand years, may shame and poverty be my portion in this life ; may the hatred of powerful enemies, or what is worse, the scorn of my dearest friends, pursue me ; may my Body be but a Scene of Diseases, and so incapable of the least gust of pleasure ; and more than this, may an awakned tender Conscience every moment flash Death and Hell into my face, or if there be any thing worse let me suffer it, so it but preserve my Soul from Sin here and from that inexpressible state of torments afterward !

And yet all this while I have taken no notice of those additional sufferings which *Divine Vengeance* will no doubt inflict upon the Soul, nor of the nature of the Soul; the exaltedness of whose Essence heightens and sharpens the pain ; for the more delicate the Being, the more subtle its perception, and the more exquisite the torment.

Sect. 3. There is a Third state where-
in misery swells to the highest mark it
can possibly, when the Body, being rais'd
again shall follow the Fate of the Soul,
and both shall be condemn'd to inextin-
guishable

The wicked man's State after the Resurrection,

guissable flames. O Hell, where only
the Enemies of God and Goodness dwell!
where wretched Men undergo all that
fulling the Divine Glory, and *trampling* on the *Blood* of Christ can merit!
But I have reserv'd a place for a farther
Survey of this state.

*The Inference
and Conclusion.*

I am sufficiently convinc'd, that the
gaining of the whole World cannot re-
compence the loss of my Soul, since its
loss implies all this, and more: for what
would I take to be miserable? or rather,
what would I take to be eternally so?
is it a rational question, If I lose *my self*
what can be gain to *me*? the World per-
adventure will continue amiable many
ages after I am gone, but what is that
to me?

And if to gain the whole World at so
dear a price be so ill a Bargain, how fatal
a purchase should I make, who am like to
gain so little, being none of the World's
greatest Favourites! My Soul is not so
cheap yet, that I can set it at so low a
rate, as a few hundreds a-year: I am as
immortal as any Monarch in Christen-
dom; and my pretensions to the Almighty's
favour may grow equal to that of a
ny

ny of the Sons of men, and I should be a Profligate and Reprobate, a Brute indeed, if I should abandon my poor Soul to Misery, and renounce the Interest I have in the God of Heaven and Earth, for I know not what.

Let who will therefore sweat and toil for wealth and greatness, I have but this one busines to doe, to insure this dear, dear Soul of mine in its voyage to ~~eternity~~⁸⁾; let who will gain the Reputation of a wise man by a clearer forelight and thriftier management of affairs, by an unwearied attendance, and insinuating applications, I shall think my self ~~wise~~^{wise} enough, if I can but be fav'd, and great enough if I enjoy but the Smiles of Heaven: Let who will applaud themselves for the contempt of intrigue and fullen business, whilst they thaw and dissolve in soft and delicate pleasures, or waste and spend themselves in course and toil—
“ some Lusts; If I may enjoy the pleasure of a manly rational life, spent in
“ a constant course of Religion and Virtue, without superstition or frowardness; of a mind unharas'd by desires
“ and fears; of a peacefull assur'd Conscience;

" science ; of the contemplations of glorious Truths, and the hopes of a blessed Immortality, I shall envy none the happiness of the most luscious pleasure, or kindest fortune the World affords.

A Prayer reflecting on the preceding Discourse,

Blessed God, give me grace to preferr the interest of my Soul to the World and Flesh; the things eternal to the things temporal; that amidst the pleasures of Prosperity and Peace, and the flatteries of Reputation, I may not forget to think what will be the condition of my future state; and that amidst the troubles which besiege this mortal Life, I may be supported by the blessed hopes of a better World; that the confident belief of the Soul's immortality may render me industrious to lay up a good foundation for the time to come; so that when I shall have put off this tabernacle of clay, I may be cloath'd with a building of God, not made with hands eternal in the Heavens: all this I beg, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

CHAP.

C H A P. II.

Of the Nature of Christianity. Christianity consists of Faith and Practice. Three things especially to be regarded in our Faith. 1. Its tendency to promote holyness. 2. That no scruples about matters of Faith destroy the peace of our bosoms. 3. That difference of opinions do not destroy Charity.

Christianity may be considered either in relation to *Faith*, or *Practice*: I will first consider the Christian *Faith*, and that in the most practical manner I can.

In my Creed, I have regard to three *things especially*. 1. To the use and ^{to be regarded in our} end of *Faith*, which is certainly to guide ^{creed.} and influence our lives. 2. To the peace of my own Breast. And 3. To the preservation of *Charity*: My Reason for the *first* is evident of it self; because without ^{of our} *Faith*, Holyness no man shall see God, if therefore my *Faith* do not produce this, it can avail me nothing. My Reason for the second is

The peace of our Conscience, is this: Though I may doubt whether *our Conscience*, I believe aright all that is necessary to my eternal salvation, and yet that doubt not prove injurious to my happiness at the last day, because I did both believe aright and live conformably to it; and the scruple arose onely from the disputes and contests of men, and the weakness of my own understanding, not from any iniquity of my will; yet this doubt will disquiet and disturb my repose, damp my chearfulness and vigour, and may peradventure unsettle my Faith, and end, if not in Atheism, in coldness and indifference. It is evident then that it nearly concerns me to guard my Soul against all scruples that may endanger its peace.

*The preserva-
tion of Chari-
ty.*

My reason for the 3^d is this: Though I may believe *Another* in a damnable Errour, when he is not, without prejudice to my own Soul, because I may make this judgment in the simplicity of my heart, by the best Light and Rule I have; yet peradventure this opinion may improve it self insensibly upon my affections, to a very ill consequence, and invite me to an uncharitable and unfriendly

LL ly

ly deportment; which if it do, as it must prove injurious to my Neighbour, so must it be prejudicial to my Eternal interest; wherefore 'tis plain that it behoves me much to take care that my zeal for an opinion do not destroy my Charity: I will therefore consider Faith with reference to these 3 things, Holyness, Peace, Charity.

9. i. If I consider the Christian Faith *of Faith with respect to its influence on our lives.* with regard to the great end of it, Holiness, I observe that the Gospel contains two great things, the Knowledge of God, *The belief of and of Jesus Christ; This is life eternal God and Jesus Christ sufficient.* Joh. 17. 3. to know thee the onely true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent: This knowledge contains in it all the Obligations imaginable to a holy life, and secures the hopes and comforts of Christians upon an unmovable foundation; and this knowledge agrees perfectly with the Nature and Ends of Religion.

i. First, *With the Nature of Religion:* Religion is nothing else but the true and spiritual worship of the onely true God, who is a Spirit: Now all the worship we are capable of paying him, consists either in the Affections of the Soul, or,

Actions

Actions of the Body so that that Belief or Knowledge which tends to render these proper and acceptable to God, is directly conformable to the Nature of Religion; the Gospel therefore hath discovered God to us, i. One, infinite in Wisdom, Power, Holiness and Goodness. And secondy, as he stands more particularly related to us in the Work of Creation, Providence, Redemption. All this put together proves him to be *God*, and to be *Ours*; it evinces his *Excellency* and his *Supremacy*; it represents him infinitely *Lovely* and *Adorable* in himself, and entitles him to all the service and affection, which *Dominion*, *Love* and *Manifiscence* can lay a just claim to, all which is enforcement enough (which is the use of Faith) to our Duty, when we are acquainted with it.

Which that we might be, and that we might have assistance to enable us to perform it, and that there might be a provision made for the pardon of our errours, God in his infinite Wisdom thought it necessary to send his Son into the World, and therefore it is necessary to eternal Life to believe in Jesus Christ

Christ whom he hath sent; and about him we are inform'd in the Gospel, that he is the Son of God; that he was made Man, and liv'd here upon Earth, that he might teach us our Duty, and leave us an Example of it; that he was crucified for our sins; that he arose again from the Dead, and after forty Days, sojourning here, he was received into Glory, and became the Head and Prince of his Church, and shall at the last day judge both the quick and the dead.

The belief of all which illustrates the Justice and Mercy of the Most High God; assures us of the truth of his Promises; i. e. The assistance of the Spirit of God, and eternal Rewards; and super-adds most powerfull Obligations to Obedience, and lays an unshaken foundation of Joy and Peace by shewing us on what account our sins are pardon'd, and our services accepted. So that now there will need but few words to prove,

2. That this knowledge doth directly serve the *End and Aims of Religion*, which must be *God's Glory and Man's Happiness*, the former is already prov'd;

for to *Glorifie* and to *Worship* God are equivalent terms; the latter easily appears thus, in that this belief doth, 1. Rescue us from the power of sin, by pow-
erfull motives, and endearments to, and,
by supernaturall assistances of virtue;
and, 2. From the *guilt* of it by the bloud
of Christ; and so it frees us from the
~~flavish~~ misery of unruly passions, and from the
fears of death and Hell. 3. It
composes our minds in all the various
changes of the world, by the firm per-
suasion of the wisdom, power and
goodness of the God who governs it.
And lastly, it delights and satisfies our
Souls by the discovery of Objects fit
for their love and enjoyment; which is
no less essentially necessary to our pre-
sent happiness than any of the former;
for Man being a weak and empty
Creature, cannot, like God, find his
happiness in the *fruition* of *himself*, but
must seek it in something else, which
must be able to fill all his desires and ap-
petites, and satisfie all his Capacities of
enjoyment.

O happy Christian, that conquers the
World and himself, that is freed from all
fears

*The Blessed
Effects of
this Faith.*

fears and jealousies about a future State, and enjoys the ravishing Objects of a glorious Faith; well may the Holy Spirit make up the description of this State, of characters of Joy, Peace and Hope.

§.2. But now Secondly, that this Happiness may be entire, it is necessary to secure the *peace of my own bosom*, as to the matters of Faith: and this may be disturbed two ways either by doubting of the *Truth*, or else the *Sense* of Divine Revelation: we are *tempted* to the former commonly by this Argument, *These things cannot be, therefore the Book, which contains the History of them, is an imposture.* To the latter, by much the same Argument, *These things cannot be, therefore* (since we cannot deny the authority of Scripture) we must explain them in some other sence: Both proceed upon this bottom, *I cannot understand or conceive the possibility of this or that, therefore it cannot be.*

*Peace of Con-
science, with
regard to
Faith, how
attained.*

To secure my self from the first of these, I consider the infinite Majesty of the God we worship, and the trifling, dwarfish Capacities of us Men, and then I wonder not, that some Articles should rather

ther surprize and dazzle my faculties than enlighten them.

To expect otherwise, were to forget the nature of mysteries, and of my self. It is true, to believe without a Reason for it, is Credulity, not Faith; but then Revelation is the highest Reason for the belief of things supernatural, there being no other mean left us to attain to their knowledge; so that all that Reason can have to doe here, is not to discuss the probability of the Article revealed; but the Authority of the revelation, and this being once clear'd, to surrender up our doubts and scruples: which is (weighing the shallowness of our understandings, and the depths of mysteries) no more than in a tedious long journey, our eyes being dim, and the way unknown and intricate, to abandon our selves to the conduct of a kind, skilful and faithfull Guide. The Sum of all is this, Man is born like a wild Ass's Colt, and arrives into a rational Creature by painfull institution, and slow progressions, the Soul being clouded by Passions, imprison'd and limited by scanty Organs, perverted by unhappy prejudices; and therefore

therefore 'tis a very, wild and extravagant piece of folly, to make ones own understanding the great standard and measure of *all truth*, or to determine, that the utmost of our Fancy is the utmost extent of Nature and of the Deity too; for on the other hand, God is a great and *incomprehensible* Being, *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be prais'd, and his greatness is unsearchable*, Psal. 145. 3. and therefore by a clear consequence, our Faith is not the less reasonable, because it is the more *refign'd*; an awfull distance and a modest Faith is as essential a part of Holiness, as the conformity of our Wills to the Divine Law. These very considerations will serve to secure me,

2. Against all doubts, about the *Sence* of Revelation, for the received and general sence appears to be the more natural and obvious, and therefore no objection lies against it, but what is already remov'd, the seeming impossibility of it: and if it be farther consider'd, that the Gospel was address'd to persons of very ordinary endowments; and therefore to be understood in its

most obvious fence; That it is most conformable to that humble infant Spirit Christ requires in his Disciples, to qualify them for the reception of his Doctrine, to Believe rather than Dispute: That the receiv'd fence is the fence of the whole Catholick Church. That an Error of judgment, which springs from Humility not Pride, will be rather pitied than punish'd by a good God, this altogether will easily raise my Faith above all scruple and wavering: Especially if I add to all this, this one Observation, That the adversaries of any one Article of Faith, have never made up one entire Body, but several Sects, divided by numerous and contradictory Tendencies built up upon different Foundations, that they have never been able to propagate any thing but wild and unaccountable fancies; that they have set Scripture at a more irreconcilable distance from it self, and instead of clearing its mysterious fences, have made its plainest fence a Mystery.

From all this I am oblig'd to resolve, not to gaze, and stare upon Majesty, lest I be blinded by the shine of it; but worship

ship and adore, that I may be blest by it. I'll look upon my Creed like the Ark of God, 2 Sam. 6. It must not be toucht by a bold hand, though to support it, all its Articles are like the Stones of the Altar, Exod. 20. To lift up a tool of a Workman upon them, though with design to polish and adorn, is nothing else, but to profane and unhallow them.

If after all this I chance to Err, "I do not doubt, but that the purity of my intention, the diligence of my inquiry, the meekness and intireness of my Resignation, will, through the mercies and goodness of a gracious God, secure my Heaven, and render my error innocent and harmless. All that is behind now is in the

§. 3. Third place, to preserve my Charity for my Neighbour, lest that Faith which should be the strong engagement to union, become the unhappy Instrument of Divisions. To this end I consider, i. That the Controversies now on foot in Christendom are not about the Truth; but fence of Divine Revelation; none at all calling into question

*Charity in
Faith, how to
be preserved.*

the veracity, but the meaning of God ; and therefore I cannot conceive the Glory of God any more lessen'd or injur'd by variety of Opinions than by variety of Capacities ; unless in their consequence.

2. As the bare assent to a Truth doth not save, so I see no reason, why the holding of an Errour should damn, unless it be such as hath a sinfull Original or Issue, or such as is not consistent with the Honour and Glory of the Most High God ; and indeed no Opinion which lessens the Majesty of the Most High God , can be taken up by any one professing Christianity, but that it must begin or end in Sin : But yet the aggravation or extenuation of the guilt of a Man thus erring, may depend upon so many circumstances, as Capacity, Education , Means and Opportunity of better information, the strength of prejudices, and such like, that he must be left to the judgment of God alone, and my duty, as a private Christian, is to love and pray for him, and to endeavour his reducement by all the pious Subtilties I can. This is the general Rule of the Apostle, *Let not the Weak Judge*

*Judge the Strong, nor the Strong despise
the Weak.*

"I will live in the peacefull temper
" of these persuasions; happy in the en-
" joyment of a smooth and settled Calm,
" resign'd up to God, stanch and con-
" sistent in my self, and possess'd by cha-
" ritable hopes of my Neighbour: I'll
" endeavour to keep a Conscience void
" of offence towards God and towards
" Man; and then I hope I may at last re-
" sign my Spirit into the hands of a faith-
" full Creatour, in the Joys and Trans-
" ports of this Precious Christian Faith.

The Prayer.

Glorious and incomprehensible God,
suppress in me all proud thoughts,
all wild and wanton Curiosities, and keep
my Soul in the humble frame of new born
babes! Thou dwellest in Light inacces-
sible, my Soul in a cloud of Flesh and
Bloud; my Faculties are weak and taint-
ed, and thy Light dazzling; and therefore
it is not for me, Lord, it is not for me,
saucily to discuss, or pragmatically to de-
termine of, but bumbly to receive, and
heartily

heartily to embrace those *Mysteries*, which thou a God of Truth, of Goodness, and of Power, hast vouchsaf'd to reveal to us by the Son of thy Bosom: Lord, I confess, that though these *Mysteries* have a dark, they have a bright side too; for though I cannot see through them, yet I see enough to oblige me to worship thee in Humility and Love, and these, these, I hope, will secur me in thy Love through Christ. Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief; enlighten my blindness! quicken and enliven my dulness! support my frailties! dispense my Passions! free me from all the prejudices which clog my sinfull nature; and finally beget in me an earnest desire after those blisfull Mansions, where my Faith shall be swallowed up in visions. Amen blessed Jesus.

*Directions to
those of meaner
Capacity, con-
cerning their
Faith or Creed.*

Thus I have consider'd the Christian Faith, and secur'd my own Peace: But there are multitudes of People of a lower Rank and Capacity, who may not, it may be, reach the design of this Section, who are distract by the numerous Controversies every where on foot, and frighted by the rash zeal of their

their Abettors : For the satisfaction of such, I consider,

That it is easie to deduce from the Gospel, 1. That the Almighty will judge men by their several measures and opportunities. 2. That the great Fundamentals of Religion are clear as daylight, and therefore the Gospel is call'd *Light*, and the *Grace of God* is said to appear unto all men, which (though I suppose primarily meant in opposition to the darkness of Gentilism, and in some measure of Judaism too, and to that narrower limitation of this Grace under the Mosaical Oeconomy) implies with all the clearness of the Gospel, of which, were there no other proof, this one would suffice, That the Gospel was design'd for the benefit of all Mankind, and more immediately preach'd to the Poor, and Silly, and refuse of the World: The consequence of this is, that it seems, at least to me, wholly improbable, that any body should be betray'd into a necessity of Erring in fundamentals, unless they be accessory to their own Errour, and therefore this being once granted, I may resolve all I can think of necessary

ry for the Multitude into two directions.

1. That holding fast to manifest Fundamentals, they, for the rest, submit themselves to the Government they are under, which will be safe for them upon three accounts. 1. That the points controverted are such, which *they* are not of necessity oblig'd to know. 2. That *they* themselves are not capable of making any solid inquiry into them, and therefore to resign themselves to those set over them, is the utmost of their duty. 3. That in this case, their submission to the publick Authority of the Church they are of, is an act of Obedience and Humility, and most conformable to the command of God, and the Peace and unity of the World.

2. That they never preferr a doubtfull opinion to the prejudice of a plain Precept or duty; a Man may go to Heaven, though he be not of this or that opinion, but without Obedience and Charity he cannot; but to do this, is to stickle for a Sect, in violation of Obedience and Charity, and to preferr an humour before ones Duty, which is a certain Symtom

of a mind infatuated by Pride, or perverted by interest.

C H A P. III.

Of Christianity with respect to Practice.

Sect. 1. *Of being Good.* The true notion of Gospel Holiness stated. Negative Righteousness: Positive or Affirmative Righteousness. The Principles and Degrees of it. §. 2. *Of doing Good.* What may not be the motives to a Solitary Life. An active Life, 1. more Excellent, 2. more necessary than a Solitary or Contemplative one. §. 3. Rules relating to doing Good.

Sect. 1.

OF Practice in general, which contains *Being* and *Doing* Good.

We are born into a World full of Snares and Temptations; and we ourselves are Creatures blind, and yet wilfull; weak and yet wanton too: and upon these accounts we are vouchsaf'd the Favour of Divine Revelation, to conduct us through our Pilgrimage, to enable

ble us to fight the good fight of Faith, and to prevent our miscarrying through the Deceitfulness of Sin, and the frailty of humane nature ; and therefore whoever doth not improve this gift of God, into all these Advantages and Benefits, defeats the design of Heaven, and receives the Grace of God in vain.

Besides all this, the great Authour of all things hath declar'd himself a God *jealous of his honour, and delighted in the happiness of his Creatures* ; from whence I naturally inferr, that *that one*-*ly can be a design worthy of Christ's descent into Earth, which promotes the Glory of God, and the Happiness of Man, and that is, onely Goodness or Holiness, concerning which I will,*

1. Enquire what kind of Goodness or Holiness that is, which the Gospel of Christ requires : And,

2. Prove that it tends to advance the Glory of God, and happiness of Mankind ; which will serve not onely as a proof of its being the scope and drift of Christianity, but also for a strong enforcement, and motive to it.

§ 1. I will state the notion of *Gospel Holiness*. What is meant by Holiness. St. Paul, Tit. 2. 12. tells us plainly that this consists in *denying Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts*, and in *Living Righteously, Soberly and Godly in this present World*, looking for the *Blessed Hope and the Glorious Appearance of the Great God and our Saviour Christ Jesus*. Now the least that this can import, is that we are to abstain from all plain and open violations of the Commandments; such as are, 1. All Negative Holiness. debasing of God in our imaginations, and depraved Acts of Worship consequent to this, and all unthankfulness to him. Secondly, all sorts of Falshood and injustice. Thirdly, all kind of unnatural Lusts, and Excess, destructive to our Health or Reason, all this being nothing else but the *Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts*, which we are to deny, and the very Heathens by the light of Nature Rom. 1. 32. know, that they who do such things are worthy of Death.

This I say is the least, that can be imported by the words of that Text, Tit. 2. 12. some there are who live and talk, as if there was nothing more, nothing

nothing higher included in it, so desirous are they that Religion should be gentle and easie that they seem to think that it implies nothing more than a mere negative Righteousness or abstinence from scandalous Crimes.

They tell us, that it is plain that the Scripture speaking with respect to the Life of the Gentiles which was depraved below the light of Nature, doth by mortification, mostly intend an abstinence from those actions amongst them which were manifest Transgressions of the Law. *Mortifie therefore your Members which are upon the Earth; Fornication, Uncleanliness, &c. Col. 3. 5.*

Next they tell us that all Wise Men who understand humane Nature and the World, embrace Christianity themselves and recommend it to others under the Character of a Debonair & Complaisant Religion.

To all this I easily answer, 1. That at this rate the way to Life seems so exceeding broad and the gate so very wide, that unless a Man be born with a most villainous temper, and that be improv'd by a loose and undisciplined Education,

cation, he may make a shift to enter in without much striving or strugling, which seems to me very opposite to the Affection of our Saviour, *Strait is the Gate and narrow is the way that leadeth to Life,* X
and few there be that find it.

Secondly, 'tis true that Mortification in *Scripture*, relates especially to those *Lusts* and Crimes rise amongst Jew and Gentile, but then I must mind you, that Mortification is but one part of Christian *Holyness*; and that Abstinence from gross Sin, is but half of Mortification. And Thirdly, I hope those that speak such soft things of Christianity, do intend it of a spiritual pleasure, or else of that more perfect state, wherein they that are arriv'd at it know how to abound, because having obtained a more compleat Conquest over the Body, and the World, they are not so easily ensnared as new Converts.

Now therefore I conclude, Secondly that living *Righteously, Soberly, and Godly;* 62
Tit. 2. 12. must signify much more than the denying *Ungodliness and worldly Lusts:* The mere ceasing to do evil is not all that the *Scripture* means by *being and doing* good:

good. In a word there is a Positive, an Affirmative as well as a Negative *Righteousness* required in the *Gospel*; and to the end we may not form a wrong notion of this, I will a little consider its principles and degrees.

1. *Acts of Sobriety and Justice*, perform'd, without any deliberation, by the mere inclination of Nature, (if such may be) are merely *natural Actions*, neither good nor evil; neither rewardable nor punishable.

2. *Acts of Sobriety and Justice*, perform'd upon the sole instigation of *pleasure*, and *convenience*, which attends such a Life in this present World, are very proper and natural effects of *Reason*, but under the *Gospel* they do not constitute any part of the *Righteousness* of the *Kingdom of Heaven*, because our Actions are to proceed from *nabler Motives*; not that I deny, but that to us Christians, *worldly Happiness* may be a very lawfull incentive to Holiness, but then it must be in its place, not the sole and great, but a subordinate inducement. Thus though the Apostle invites us to goodness by *Praise* and a *good Report*, yet he, who

who is *virtuous* merely that he may be fam'd for it, is a vain-glorious Sinner: so though the promises of this *Life* annexed to Godliness, may encourage us to embrace it, yet if any man be godly merely for present pleasure and happiness in this Life, he is but a *worldly* man; nor do I here onely mean that worldly pleasure must not be the *sole*, but that it must not be the *great*, the *principal* allurement to Religion; something it may contribute, but it must be in its place and its degree.

3. To deny any sin upon the account of Religion, i. e. The Fear and Love of God, and hopes of Salvation, is certainly an acceptable Sacrifice; but because in all our Actions there are generally many motives twisted together, and because man out of fondness for himself is very apt to attribute the work to that motive which it is his interest should be uppermost; therefore it will very nearly concern every one, to examine seriously the degrees and strength of this Faith he pretends to; for peradventure, though this Faith be strong enough to restrain him from *wild and unnatural Lusts*,

Luſts, because it leaves him enjoyments and pleasures enough to entertain him with more delight in their ſlead ; and gives him up to a Life no leſs *ſensual*, though the instances of ſenſuality be more regular : Yet it may not be powerfull enough to crucifie all worldly and carnal affections, and to force him to do perfect violence to his Inclinations : his fondneſs for the pleaſures of this Life may be too stubborn to give way to a Faith which is not more *deeply rooted*, nor arm'd and wing'd with holy *paſſion* ; and the Body may be too high fed to ſurrender up all its ſatisfactions upon the demands of a drowsie Faith ; ſo that the man doth not *intirely deny himself* be-cause Religion commands it ; but thus far he thinks fit to *comply* with Religion because it doth him no harm , it doth not intrench upon his *ſensual enjoyment* : and if this be his Case, though the man may have call'd in Faith to the assistance of Reason, yet he doth not ſuffer it to Reign, and by conſequence his Life is ſtill the Life of *Sense*, and not of *Faith*. Faith comes in but ſlantingly and collaterally into his Life; it is not the

the main and chief inducement to his Actions.

4. And lastly. A Life led in mere *abstinence* from evil, and yet an allowance of the utmost freedoms we can with innocence enjoy (upon supposal that such a man could so love God and Heaven, as to be able to renounce all, when call'd thereto, a supposition I can very difficultly be reconcil'd to) is but the *minimum morale*; if Holiness, yet *Positive Holiness*. the lowest degree of it; and the Gospel seems to me to have a farther aim, to propose a greater height, and to expect from its Votaries a nobler *perfection*; which will easily appear to any one who shall diligently consider, i. The great Motives to Holiness, which it contains, that is, a declaration of the Divine Nature, Jo. i. 18. The infinite Love of God to Mankind, manifested in the blessed Jesus, and the full Discovery of Life and Immortality; or, secondly, the mighty assistances it promises, that is, the blessed Spirit of God, and Divine Providence, employed either in preventing us from falling into temptations too big for this imperfect

state, or else in finding a way to our *escape* out of them: or, thirdly, the immediate end of Christian Religion, that is whilst we are here on *Earth* to fit us for *Heaven*: He that shall seriously lay to heart these three things, will be forc'd to conclude, That in all reason, the Gospel must require of us something proportionable to the extraordinary motives, the powerfull assistances, and the glorious end it assures and proposes to its Children; and this must be something more than a mere *negative* righteousness; for it is unreasonable, that this *Light* should beget in us no greater degrees of Love and fear for God, than what *natural Reason* might; or if it doth, that the *instances* of our Obedience, now under the *Gospel*, should be onely such, as the strength of nature might have enabled men to comply with under *Gentilism*, though it must be confess not so easily as now.

Agreeably to this Doctrine our Holy Saviour in his Sermon on the Mount, (which is the Rule and Standard of the Christian Life) sets us a more *exalted* pattern: Not onely to be *True* in our words,

words, and *Fast* in our dealings with our Neighbour, but to be *Charitable*, *Gentle*, *Patient*, and to return *good* for *evil* to our very *Enemies*: not onely to avoid all *unnatural Lusts* and *wild Excesses*, but also to be *pure* and *holy*, to admit of no *sensual Fancy* or *unchaste Looks*, or idle Words: to *fast* and *afllict* our selves: *Blessed are they which mourn*. He forbids us all *Ambition*, and *Covetousness*, and *Vain-glory*, not merely on the account of *injustice*, for that doth not always unavoidably cleave to them, but as they are the *Acts of a worldly mind*, which is perfectly contrary to *poverty of Spirit*, and to *laying up our Treasures in Heaven*, and to *the taking up of the Cross of Christ*, so powerfully and sweetly recommended. Our duty to God is couch'd all along in the whole Discourse, but the *Acts of Worship* more plainly express'd are *loving him as a Father*, *praying to him*, *endeavouring to promote his Glory*, and *clearfully to obey his Will*, *relying upon him for assistance in our spiritual Warfare*, for *Provision*, *Protection* and *Deliverance* in this life; and add to all

this, this one circumstance, That all this is to be done with *delight, constancy and vigour*, (implied in those general Precepts, *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; Lay up for your selves treasures in heaven;* — *For where your treasure is there will your heart be also; Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof; and, Strive to enter in at the strait gate, &c.)* and then you have our Saviour's Sence of Christian Holiness.

If we consult his Disciples, the best Expositors of their Master's Text, we shall find the whole of Religion compris'd in two things. The *Mortification of the outward Man, and the Resurrection of the inward*, by which they mean, as appears from Coloss. 3. *A setting our affections upon things above, and not upon things on the earth*, from whence I will inferr two conclusions.

I. That our affections are an essential part of Holiness, that it is not enough to *approve of invisible things in our understanding, and then act not as Men who love God and Heaven, and Goodness*

ness, but as Men who see it unavoidably *necessary* to do something, and therefore go as far as is consistent with that *carnality* they yet resolve to gratifie; but that we must *love* them also; and this to that degree that it may be able to extinguish our *passion* for the *World*; and therefore,

2. The life we are to lead, must be such a one as may most tend to enkindle in us *holy passions* for the things above, a *delight* in the survey of our *hopes*, and *desires* of entring into the presence of God; all which cannot be attain'd but by frequent *Prayer, Meditation, Hearing* and *Reading* of God's Word, the *holy Communion*, and heavenly *Discourses*: and on the other side our Life must be such as may most effectually tend to *take off our affections* from the world, and beget in us a generous *contempt* of it, which can never be effected, but by repeated acts of *self-denial, fasting, watching, meditating* on the example of a *crucified Saviour*, the *glories and pleasures* of another Life, the *vanity* and yet *bewitcheries* of this fading one. I may be confident, that a constant caressing the *senses*

senses with feasting, drinking, wanton dalliances, the pomp and vanities of Life, cannot be a proper method to the mortification of the outward man or vivification of the inward.

So that if a very abstemious Life (as to the general course of it) be not requir'd, as an essential part of Holiness, yet it is necessary as the means and instrument of it : conformable to this whole discourse is that of S. Paul, *1 Cor. 7. 29, 30.* But this I say, Brethren, the time is short; it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possess'd not; and they that use this world as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away: Where we are not onely interdicted unlawfull pleasures, but forbidden to give our selves up to lawfull ones; and commanded to use such moderation as may become men fully perswaded of the shortness and vanity of this Life, and possess'd by the expectations of a better.

The

The Sum of all is this, The Christian State is a State of extraordinary Holiness and Purity; 'tis a new Nature, wrought by Principles, Motives, Affiances, different from those of the natural Man; 'Tis, in one word, To be heavenly minded; and therefore that course of Life, which can best serve to encrease this blessed temper, is the Christian's Duty; and that course which quenches it, which softens and sensualizes us, is inconsistent with Christianity, and inconsistent with Regeneration; for if we be risen with Christ, we shall not onely love, but seek those things which are above; it being impossible for any man to live, (when he can chuse) quite contrary to his own desires; so that he who loves God need not be told, that he must Pray and Meditate, and Communicate, and be doing good, &c. When he knows he can enjoy him here below no way else; he that hates Sin, and loves Holiness, needs not be told that he must lead an abstemious Life, when he knows that feasting and drinking, &c. do feed the Body into wantonness and lust, and quench the holy flame

flame of Love, and indispose it for religious Duties.

From all this it is plain. Religion is in its essence an inward and spiritual Holiness: outward actions can be considered but two ways, either as the *means* and *instruments*, or else as the *fruits* and *effects* of Holiness; and both ways a sober temperate Life (as to the general course of it) is indispensibly necessary; though I cannot here deny, but that there must be an allowance made for the *variety of tempers*, and the *different strengths of grace, &c.* proportionable to each Man's different case.

Having thus given an Account of the nature of the Holiness which the Gospel requires, I come

2. To shew that it tends to promote *God's Glory and Man's Happiness.*

Holiness necessary to promote God's Glory.

1. *God's Glory.*

1. Though a right understanding be wholly necessary to, yet it self is no part of Divine Worship; it is not mere knowledge or belief of a Truth, but Love, and Fear, and Obedience by which we honour God, and devote our selves to him; there is no where more light of

knowledge

knowledge (Heaven excepted) than in those Regions of darkness where the most impious Spirits dwell, but no body will say that they there worship God. 'Tis true an understanding illuminated is certainly a beautifull thing, but then if it be joyn'd to an unsanctified Will, the Man in the whole is the most deform'd and loathsome thing imaginable, for he is made up of two the most disproportional and contradictory things, as if he were formed as the Poet fansies men, growing out of the slime of the Deluge, the upper parts enlivened Flesh and Blood, the lower Mud and Clay ; the light of the Understanding enhances the guilt of malice and degeneracy in the Will ; for to see God, and not love and obey him is strangely malicious, but if his beauty be not adorn'd by things that have no eyes to see it, 'tis not to be wondred at.
If ye had been blind, then had ye had no sin.

2. *The Heavens*, saith the Psalmist, declare the Glory of God, &c. Their brightness and vastness, whilst they engage our wonder, invite us to the contemplation

temptation of the Power, and Infinite-
ness, and Majesty of their Architect ;
so Holy and Good men declare his glo-
ry too, for being renewed after his
Image in Holiness and Righteousness,
they represent to the World an imper-
fect draught of some of the glorious At-
tributes of the God they Worship : thus
as the power of Miracles imparted to the
Apostles, fore'd the beholders *to glorifie*
God, who had given such gifts unto men ;
so too Christ exhorts his Disciples *to let*
their light shine before Men, that when
they see those good works, they may glo-
rifie God, who is in Heaven ; induc'd by
the loveliness of that Goodness deriv'd
from him, as the other were by his
Power.

3. It is Goodness by which we own
a God and acknowledge him to be ours.
Divine Worship is the Confession of our
Meanness and his Majesty ; and confor-
mity to his Laws is the fullest proof we
can give of our Allegiance and his Su-
premacy ; and therefore they who live
irreligiously, let them pretend to believe
and think what they will, are said to be
without God in the world, and to deny
him in their works.

4. Holiness

4. Holiness or Goodness is really Divine Worship, and therefore it is in Scripture defin'd to be Religion, and Wisdom, and Knowledge. *To know God this is Wisdom, and to depart from evil this is Understanding; to do Justice, to relieve the Poor and Needy, is not this to know God,* saith the Lord: *Pure Religion and undefiled is this, to visit the Fatherless and Widows in their affliction, and to keep ones self unspotted from the World.* More plainly; What is Worship, but the cleaving to God with purity and earnestness of Affections acting in conformity to his Law as those Affections shall invite and inable us? And this is the very same thing with Holiness. So that it is plain, that Holiness and Goodness contribute to God's Glory, the two onely ways we are capable of glorifying him, that is by our own particular Worship, and by the influence our example hath upon others.

§. 2. Holiness is most serviceable to the Happiness of Man here and hereafter. Holiness necessary to the Happiness of Man, in this Life.

i. Here.

I. *Here.*

1. " All the advantage of peacefull
" Government, friendly Neighbourhood,
" comfortable and closer Unions, and
" pleasant Retirements, depend on and
" arise from Goodness: But suppose the
World planted with Covetousness instead of Justice, Pride instead of Meekness, Cruelty instead of Compassion, Revenge and Malice instead of Mildness and Charity, Falshood and Lying instead of Constancy and Truth, &c. and imagine, if you can, whether all Societies would not be torn into as many Factions as there are cross interests and opposite passions, whether any Commerce could be just and smooth, any tie lasting and delightfull, whether it were poifible to find security or pleasure either in a private or a publick Life.

2. " It is Holiness which best secures
" a man's inward peace, guards and arms
" him against those impressions which
" outward temptations make, prescribes
" bounds to our Desires, scatters our
" Fears, confirms our Hopes, raises our
" Affections to things of true and lasting
Excel-

Excellency; that is, in few words, it not onely settles our peace by establishing the empire of the mind over the inferiour Appetites, but also provides for our pleasure, by filling the mind with spiritual Joys, and Peace, and Hope.

2. *Hereafter.*

*In the Life to
come.*

Goodness is wholly necessary, 1. To recommend us to the Love of God, whose infinite purity and excellency cannot approve of any thing that is sinfull and unholy. *This is the Message that we have received of him, that God is Light, &c.* Where you see that the Law founded in his Nature, hath an intrinsick resemblance to his own Holiness; and by consequence he can neither alter it nor dispense with its Observation. 2. To qualifie us for Heaven, for it is Goodness, which weans the Soul from all fondness for the Body and the World, and possesses it with an intense Love of God and Holiness, which two things do first capacitate it for that World, wherein God and holy Spirits dwell; and secondly recommend it to greater degrees of Glory and Happiness in it.

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Thus

Thus have I given an account of the nature of Gospel Righteous or Holiness, and demonstrated its serviceableness to the great ends of Religion, God's Glory, and Man's Happiness: I need not after all that I have said prove the necessity of it; thus the Scripture asserts in express words, *Without Holiness no man shall see God*, Heb. 12. 14. *Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven*, Matt. 7. 21. This was the great busines of our Saviour's Life, he was still instructing men in the doctrine of the Kingdom, that is, Godliness, Righteousnes and Sobriety. His Miracles did confirm the Divinity of his Person, and this was carefully secur'd, to gain authority to his Doctrine.

*Absurdity of
Faith without
Holiness.*

I will conclude this Chapter with the absurdity of the contrary Doctrine. Of what use would the Gospel be in relation either to God's Glory, or Man's happiness, if it were onely to be believ'd, and not obey'd? To what purpose is light come into the World, if men may still love Darkness? To what purpose did

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the Son, who lay in the bosom of the Father, reveal him more gloriously to us, if, knowing him as God, it be yet lawfull for us not to glorifie him as such? —

And as insignificant would this opinion render it to the happiness of Man; for of what use will all the excellent rules of Justice, Charity, Meekness and Temperance prove, if we continue peevish and revengefull, intemperate and lustfull? &c. To what purpose are the fuller discoveries of another World, Life and Immortality, and the Belief of Jesus being the Son of God, if they do not enable us to conquer the world, and mortifie the flesh? And if I walk according to the Laws of the Flesh, i.e. Violate the Laws of the Spirit, can I chuse but dread a God whom I have wrong'd? And will not unruly Passions and as troubled Conscience make a Christian a miserable as a Jew or Heathen?

If Goodness now be the end and drift of the holy belief of Christians, then I inferr,

1. That the best Man is the best Son of the Church, and he whose affections

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are more rais'd and heavenly, and hath least of the mixture of sensuality, is of the highest form in the School of Christ, because he doth best answer the design of his Lord, and walks in some measure as he walk'd.

2. That the most infallible characters of a true Faith are to be taken from the *Government* of our Passions; our *conquest* o'er the World, and the *increase* of our inward joy, and peace, and hope. Good Lord! How apt are we to put a cheat upon the World and our selves, to persuade it and our selves that we believe, though there be no change in our Souls and Conversations, and therefore consequently we doe nothing less. I shall hereafter never think that I believe aright till I have a *Love* for all his *Commandments*, till I can meditate delightfully, pray vigorously, rely constantly, obey readily, suffer patiently, rejoice humbly, expect reverently, and (happy is me, if I attain that height) earnestly too, the hour of my death, or the appearance of my Lord. I shall never hereafter think, that I have studied or known divine truth to any purpose, till the Truth hath made

made me free, rescued me from the bondage of Sin, and fears of Death.

The Prayer.

THOU Holy, Pure and Eternal Spirit, who canst not indure iniquity! who doest so love goodness, that thou hast sent thy Son into the World to promote it; his life and his Death, his Pains and his Blood were spent in this Cause. O enable thy poor Servant, who names the name of Christ, to hunger and thirst after righteousness, and to depart from iniquity.

Lord, let thy truth and thy Spirit be powerfull in me to the subduing of all evil inclinations. I believe that all things are naked and bare before thee, and therefore that thou canst not be mock'd or imposed upon by specious pretences or formalities; That I am not to expect to appear any other in thy Eyes, than such as I am in my self; enable me therefore to confess thee in my practice as well as words, to live like one who believ'd thy holy Truths. Let my heart be fixt in Honesty and uprightness to obey all thy Commandments. Let the Belief of things

not seen have the same influence upon me, they had upon all thy holy Saints, Martyrs and Confessours, i. e. Perswade me to deny all ungodlyness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and holily in this present World, through Jesus Christ.

Sect. 2. *Of doing Good.*

*Retirements
in what Ca-
ses allowable.*

There are a sort of People who endeavour all they can to withdraw from the World, and rid their hands of business, and think it abundantly sufficient if they can discharge their duty towards God in their retirements.

This is Lawfull, nay commendable, only upon two accounts:

1. If my Temper or Circumstances be such, that my Conservation cannot be publick and safe too, for then the Salvation of my own Soul is naturally the most near and dear concern; or,

2. If my qualifications ate such, that my retirement is likely to prove more advantageous to the publick, than my filling any other Post, for then I act according to the Rules of Charity.

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There are two other inducements to a retir'd Private Life, the one founded in a vice, the other in a mistake.

1. The First is when Men withdraw from the *Business* as from the *trouble* of the World, and their *Pleasure*, not *Religion* is their first and chief motive. They meet with many rubs and oppositions in a busie Active Life, and then they grow soft, and weak, and lazy, and they want *Courage*, and *Industry*; and the frequent interruptions of their private peace and enjoyment is uneasy, and they would withdraw to enjoy themselves; and this is unchristian and unmanly, 'tis *Epicurism*, not *Contempt* of the World,

2. The mistake is, when we look upon a Monastical kind of life as the whole of Christianity, and the mere perfection of the Regenerate state, and place Piety so wholly in acts of Solitary Devotion, as to seclude the doing good and communicating; And it will behove such to consider, 1. That *true* and *apparent* Motives, *Pretence* and *Religion*, are sometimes so twisted together, that it is hard for a man to distinguish 'em.

The Active Life in general preferred.

and therefore some secret weakness or reserve may be the real, whilst zeal is made the pretended cause of this choice,

2. That the busie and Active Life is the more *Excellent*; and the more *necessary*. 1. The more excellent, as being fuller of hazards, and troubles, and temptations; there is a larger field for Virtues, for Patience, Courage, Meekness, Reliance, &c. in an active than speculative life, and such will receive more Crowns. And when I consider the Nature of God, and necessities of Mankind, I cannot but think acts of Charity as prevalent to the wiping off our guilt, as the severest penances. A vigorous and active life spent in promoting the welfare of others, is a more perfect instance of self-denial, speaks a greater contradiction to our ease and pleasure, commits more violence upon our inclinations, than any acts of private Austerity can pretend to doe; for besides the Pains, the watching, and the fasting incident to both alike; the trouble of Contrivance, the industry of addresses, the uneasiness of refusals, &c. sufficiently weigh down the one side.

Besides,

Besides, this Confinement imprisons our light under a bushel; it is a cover, a Napkin for our Talents, to conceal them, and therefore our reward will be less in another World and our graces the fainter in this, *For to him that hath, i. e. useth, shall be given.* Grace, like the Widow's Oil, increases, by being charitably imparted: That Flame, which warms my Neighbour, reflects back with a double heat upon my self, and that Goodness which cherishes his heart, softens and sanctifies my own. And over and above all this, I enjoy a strange delight in doing good, and in beholding the fruits which my own hands have planted. And my assurance, and the confidence of my hopes increases by the conscience of that Love, which my works convince me I have for my Brethren.

2. A busie employment of our selves for the advantage of others, is of more absolute necessity. The world is one intire Body, and each member must be serviceable in its place, nor can any part withdraw it self from the whole at its pleasure; hence it is that the greater

ter part of the Law of our blessed Saviour are Rules of Society, of Justice, Charity, &c. and he himself, the best example, made his Retirements by night; but by day ~~he went about doing good;~~ Nature hath founded a cognition amongst us, as we partake of the same form, shape, reason. But the Christian Religion hath cemented us in closer union, made us the members of the same Body, tied us together by faith and love, by the same Sacraments, the same Promises, and the same Hopes: and therefore we cannot in reason think we doe one another all the good we are bound to, by a mere abstinence from doing wrong, and by sequestring ourselves from the service and concerns of our Brethren.

3. Because the Glory of God is more concern'd in the deportment of whole Societies, than a few private persons, as much as the safety of a multitude is more valuable than that of a very few, and goodness redounds more to his honour when publick and almost universal, than when cloistered up in the Bowoms of a few: therefore all good men must

must needs be obliged to promote the interests of Holiness and goodness in the publick, because the Divine Glory is so deeply concerned in it.

4. (Which ought well to be consider'd,) The nature of Goodness is such that it cannot well be conceiv'd how *the being good* is separable from *doing good*. God, though his own Heaven and Happiness, did yet found a World, to which he might be an univeral Benefactor; his Goodness was certainly the most powerfull motive to his Creation, not any considerable accession that his happiness was to receive from it. This Goodness therefore in Man ought to be a Vigorous and Active Principle, and render 'em the Benefactours of Mankind. It is indeed hardly conceivable, how men should be zealous Patrons of virtue and goodness, and yet not concern'd to protect and own them, to promote and encourage 'em in the world; or how men can be inflam'd with a very strong Love of God, and yet not endeavour to establish a true sense of his Beauties and Excellencies in the minds of Men; or how, lastly, any can be possess'd with a passionate

passionate kindness for a Brother; and yet never mingle with the concerns of his Soul or Body.

Lastly, The great motives of the Gospel, the Example of our Lord and Saviour, whose Disciples we profess our selves, whom we are bound to imitate; *And he went about doing good.* The glorious rewards annex'd to all those who any ways benefit Mankind, either by instructing the mind, or relieving the Body; The Character of the Children of God at the last Judgment compos'd wholly of Acts of Charity, do all suppose an active Life. Conformable to this Doctrine is that of *Heb. 13. 15, 16.* *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of Praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our Lips, giving thanks to his Name.* But to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased; we must pray, but Prayer without doing good is an unpleasing sacrifice, without Charity our very Devotion is unchristian, and our Religion unnatural.

This let those mind, who are long in their Prayers, severe in their outward deportment,

deportment, frequent hearers of the Word, and yet we can discern in them no fruits of Meekness or Charity: let 'em consider whether they do not mistake the nature of Religion, whether they do not chuse the more easie Sacrifice, because it costs them nothing, whether they have not a secret reserve of Covetousnes or Frowardness, &c.

Having spoke thus much of the Necessity of doing good, and the Motives to it, I'll propose three or four Rules, relating to Doing *good* and submit them to your Consideration.

1. That we must judge of our call to doe good by the Capacities and fitnesses with which God hath endow'd us; and here I cannot but proclaim our own glorious privilege, That though to doe good be so great and glorious a thing, that it is a kind of imitation of God himself, a thing our blessed Saviour came down on earth for, yet it hath pleas'd God so to multiply the instances and opportunities of Goodness, that there is none so unfortunate, as to be uncapable of doing good. The happy by their wealth, the wife

wife by their knowledge; even the miserable themselves, may, by their Patience, and Courage, and Prayer, comfort and relieve the World; and we are to judge by our Parts and Fortunes the way that God hath mark'd out for our Charity, and be content to obey him in his own methods.

2. Let Meditation and Prayer administer to our good actions, and like Oil to a Lamp, give our Charity fresh Spirits and Flame; for as private Religion is deficient without publick Charity; so Charity, unless often refresh'd by Retirement, Devotion, and Heavenly Reflections, will cool and languish; our Hearts will be tough and insensible, and our doing good will be onely the effect of Custom or Prudence, or Activity of Spirit, not of Religion or Charity; and if (which is the best can be suppos'd) the man consecrates the whole Mass of his Actions by purity of intention, and continues an obstinate observer of Prayer, as far as he thinks strict duty obliges him to, yet for want of more leasurely Meditation, and more serious reflexions, his addresses will lose their warmth, his Soul

Soul will abate much of its love, and whilst his Religion loses so much of its pleasure and sweetness, what wonder if his Charity relish more of drudgery than delight?

3. That we may not be discourag'd from doing Good, by any difficulty or misfortune which may attend us in it in our nightly Reflections, let us judge not the happiness of our success, but the integrity of our endeavour; and let us think it sufficient reward, that we have obeyed God; or if we will measure our success, let us examine how much our experience hath improv'd our Meekness, our Patience, our Reliance, our Charity, for scarce any Action, but will exercise some of these graces.

4. Look upon doing good as truly your Business, as Prayer or Hearing the Word, or Meditation, &c. And therefore never think your time mispent, which is laid out in visiting the imprison'd or sick, relieving the necessitous, comforting the afflicted, and reducing those that Err into the paths of Sobriety and Truth, though this time be par'd off from our Meditations, Prayer and Sacrament. He
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is a good man indeed, who prefers meek attendance and ministry, and importunate addresses to the Souls of men, before much knowledge, passionate disputes and high pretences.

O Charity, how lovely must thou needs be in the eye of Heaven? for were thou planted in all our hearts, Earth would resemble that place above: I will be pleased therefore with my self onely in proportion to what I share of thee, for I know this is the Standard by which God now values me, and will hereafter Judge me.

If this be the end of Religion, onely to implant goodness and charity amongst us, to make us holy and like God, and kind and beneficial one to another, What is it that the World hates it for? I may say, concerning those who persecute Christianity, at St. Peter did of those who Crucified its Author? *I wot that through ignorance ye did it*, Act. 3. 17. Surely it is because you do not discern its beauty, that you do not Love it.

If any retired life promote the ends I have mention'd, as well as an Active one,

one, I would not be thought to condemn it.

The Prayer.

O God, the Heaven and Earth are full of thy goodness; the faculties of our Souls, and the senses of our bodies are all employ'd in the contemplation, and enjoyment of it; O make us who worship thee, to imitate thee too, that we may be thy Children indeed, make our Souls delight to doe good, and imprint in us such tender and compassionate Bowels, towards one another, as our dear Lord and Master had towards us. Amen, Amen, blessed Jesus.

C H A P. IV.

Of Faith, the habit and objects of it. The Affections it produceth. Of Reliance. The necessity of Faith. The ways of obtaining and improving it.

Having consider'd the Nature of Christianity in respect to practice
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in the general, I am now to speak of it more particularly, but not pretending to give an account of every single virtue, I will dwell upon three or four. Which contain the substance of the Christian duty, *i. e.* Faith, Love, Temperance and Humility, I will not apologize for the unphilosophical placing of Faith amongst practical duties, the following discourse will clear the reason of it. I place humility in the last place, not because there is not an humility which is precedent to, and disposes men for the reception of Faith, but because I look upon that humility which is consequent to, and caus'd by it, and which must always accompany it to render it acceptable, in a more peculiar and proper sense, an Evangelical Grace.

I. *Of Faith.*

When I read the glorious Achievements of a true Faith, *Heb. 11. That it subdued Kingdoms, wrought Righteousness, obtained Promises, &c.* and in one word, supported men under the greatest miseries, and arm'd them against the most taking pleasures of this World; I cannot sufficiently

sufficiently wonder, that a fuller and clearer discovery of a Heaven, confirm'd to us by the strongest evidence, i. e. the *demonstration of the Spirit and of Power*, should have so weak an influence upon us Christians. We take no more pains for Heaven, than if we did not believe there were such a place; and we have the same *cares and fears* in respect of the things present, which Heathens and Infidels have; so that though we talk much of Faith we make little or no use at all of it.

Therefore, lest any man delude and fool himself with a perswasion of being endowed with that Faith which he hath not, I'll give such an account of it as agrees with the Gospel of the Kingdom, as suits with, and serves the necessities of mankind, and the end and aims of God.

Faith, saith the blessed Apostle, is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen; the substance or presence, the evidence or proof; 'tis not a slight transient glance, a drowsie imperfect assent, a staggering wavering opinion, but 'tis a lively representation and affective Vision, a full persuasion of the

glorious truths of the Gospel: when the Objects are so fully and clearly evident that they not onely *convince*, but *take* us too; it is having the mind enlightened, and so looking upon things with the eyes of Angels, and judging by the light of the blessed Spirit.

It is not onely to see that the things invisible *are*, but to see them in some measure *such* as they are. Eternity as Eternity, and Heaven as Heaven, that is, a state of truly great and glorious happiness; on this account, the things *present* may have a different face and aspect, when regarded by the eyes of *Faith*, and when of *Sense*; for Sense stops in the things themselves, and regards their usefulness to the pleasure or profit of this present life; but Faith carries its sight forward, and compares the things which are *seen*, with those *hoped* for, the things temporal, with those eternal, and then all below appears but mere vanity.

This whole account of Faith we may find in the 13 verse of *Heb. 11. These all died in Faith,* (and what it is to die or live in *Faith*, the following words explain) *not having received the promises,*
(i. e.

(i. e. the accomplishment of them) but having seen them afar off, (i. e. by divine Revelation) were persuaded of them, and embraced them, (and the natural consequence of this was,) and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth: Now Faith is unalterable as to its essence, but its objects may vary, they may be more or fewer, clearer or darker, according to the Nature of Divine Revelation, *Heb. 1. 1.* Its evidence may be fuller or weaker, but still it must be such as may suffice to convince Man of the Divine authority of the Revelation.

As to the Christian Faith, 2. Its objects are the whole Gospel of Christ. God the Father, such as he is reveal'd by the Son. God the Son incarnate, crucified, &c. The Rewards and Punishments contain'd in it; and all in order to engage us to an entire obedience to its holy and righteous Precepts.

*The Object of
the Christian
Faith and its
Influence,*

By Faith I see that God who is invisible, who, though he dwells in Heaven, doth yet humble himself to behold all that is done upon Earth; nor doth he only behold, but govern all things too; And whilst I contemplate his *Wisdom,*

Power, Truth, Goodness Holiness and Justice, manifested to me in the Gospel, I adore and worship him, I love and fear him, I call on and rely upon him, I endeavour to walk before him and be perfect; I know nothing like him, and therefore I desire nothing beside him or equal to him in Heaven or in Earth.

+ By Faith I see the Son of God abandoning the bosom and the Glory of his Father, descending upon Earth, and assuming the form of a Servant that by his Doctrine and example he might propagate Righteousness and Holiness in the World; I trace him through all the Stages of his Sufferings and Travels, till I behold him fasten'd to the Cross, and bleeding out his meek and holy Soul at those painful wounds the Nails had made; and all this for my sins, and *the sins of the whole world*; and then with what a strange mixture of Passions that sight fills me! with grief and shame, and yet with love and hope too: How I am amaz'd to see what *indignation* a holy God hath discover'd against *Sin*! and how my heart bleeds to think that my

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sins have treated thus despitefully and cruelly my dear Lord and Master! and with what a melting passion, and vigorous resolutions of a servant industrious service, and an everlasting zeal and devotion, do I behold the amazing instances of my Saviour's Love, whilst with so much affection and sweetnes he laid down his life for me, whilst his enemy and his persecutor! O how I long to doe something for such a Saviour as this to execute my lusts, to bring his and mine enemies before his face and slay them! and now though a survey of my sins hath filled me with amazement and shame, yet since Christ hath died I look up with comfort and a humble hope! Since he hath died, did I say, yea rather since he his risen again; for,

By Faith I see him breaking forth with Power and great Glory out of his Sepulchre; I behold him ascending in triumph up to Heaven; I see with Stephen the Heavens open'd, and my Prince and Saviour sitting at the right hand of Power, with one hand dispensing his Graces, with the other holding never fading Wreaths to Crown the patience of

his Saints: And now how I am exalted above Nature, transported above the World and Flesh! how this prospect hath disarm'd the Beauties and Glories of this Life of all their Killing Charms and Temptations! how my Soul leaps for joy to see a way open'd into the Holy of Holies! and to consider the mighty interest I have in Heaven!

As for Earth, I am so far from admiring it, I value it not; I know I must *s*o-journ here a while, and therefore I must be fed and clothed, but *m*y heavenly Father knows *I have need of these things*, and his is the Earth and the fulness thereof, and therefore he cannot want means and ability to provide for me; and he is a wise and a good God, and he hath promis'd by his Son to take care of me, and all this will invite him to design and accomplish what is best for me: Upon these grounds I think I could hope (like Abraham) even against hope, I could rely upon God without any flattering appearances of Promises, Friends, nay, or any visible probabilities; I am *to seek the righteousness of the Kingdom*, and permit the Government of the World to the

the God of it; I am his Child and he is my Heavenly Father ; *to obey is my Duty*, and (with Reverence be it said) to provide for me is his.

By this time it is easie to be discern'd what kind of Faith it is must save or justify us ; " One that enlightens our Understanding, and ravisheth our Heart ; " one that prays and watches, that contends and struggles, and fights and conquers ; one that makes us too great for Earth, and fit for Heaven ; one that fears, and loves, and worships, and seeks, and relies, and hopes : And then,

3. When it hath done this, when I find my Faith made perfect in Love, when through this belief I find my self a Conquerour over the World and Flesh, and have crucified those Lusts I did before serve and gratifie ; then I am full of Joy and Peace ; then I feel that pledge of his Love, that Spirit which he hath given me, assuring me of the pardon of my sins through the bloud of Christ. Then I have a foretaste of the Powers of the World to come, and I do in some measure anticipate my Heaven ; and not till then.

*Joy and Peace
the fruit of this
true Faith.*

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For this persuasion of the Pardon of my sins (call it what you please, Faith, Peace, Hope, Assurance) is always proportionable to the success I have in my *fights of Faith*; if I have either falsely betrayed, or weakly deserted a good cause, i. e. my virtue under a temptation, which is in Scripture call'd a Tryal; If I have turn'd my back in the day of Battel; then my own Conscience condemns me, and because I know that God is greater than my Conscience and knoweth all things, therefore I cannot expect to stand when I am judged, unless I rally and repair my fault: but if upon a serious reflexion upon my Life each evening, my Conscience acquit me as a Conquerour through Faith and Love, then I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: What a beautifull morning doth this Faith shed upon my Soul! How I long that thy Kingdom, O God, may come! And how I disdain all that this vain World can flatter me with! Then, like Peter, though all men should be offended (fall through temptation) yet will not I. Give me a temptation equal to this Faith, till the sense of my frailty, as

in Peter do lowre my Confidence and yet heighten my Resolutions.

And yet all this doth not in the least imply any reliance or confidence in my own Righteousness or Works (phrases of the same sense in Scripture,) but that I know Repentance and Faith are propos'd as the sole Conditions of Justification through the blood of Christ. And that these fruits or effects of Righteousness (I mean a holy Life) are the onely evidence of these habits ; and therefore I can never perwade my self that I believe and repent, till I live well ; nor ever flatter my self with Peace, Peace through his blood, till I thus believe and repent ; to doe otherwise is presumption not Faith ; 'tis the fond and groundless confidence of foolish Virgins, which shall be for ever shut out from the Bridegroom's presence.

There is not in the Book of God any one plainer Doctrine than this, *Not every one that faith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven:* which is not every one that professes me to be Lord, and so far

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far relies upon me as to knock at the Gates of Heaven with presumption of admission, shall enter into Heaven, but he onely whose assurance springs from the Conscience of an humble, sincere and universal Obedience. *If we walk in the light as he (God) is in the light, we have fellowship one with another (and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, v. 3.) and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.* Where, walking in the light (that is Holiness) is suppos'd as a necessary condition to our purification by the blood of Christ; and, *Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed.* These are the steps or stages by which the Christian maketh his progress into assurance, Tribulation being conquer'd worketh Patience, and Patience Experience, i.e. a conviction or proof of our Love of God, and this Experience worketh hope, which contains in it the assurance of Pardon, and the expectance of a better World; and by the same method doth he who is attack'd by

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the temptations of pleasures proceed to a particular assurance.

The Sum of all is this ; man may be consider'd in three states, 1. *Of Unre-generation*, and then he is to be convinc'd of the truth of the Gospel ; if that be suppos'd done already, this belief will easily convince him of his unrighteousness, and shew him the wrath of God reveal'd from Heaven against all ungodly and impenitent sinners : And on the other hand, the blood of Christ (who became a propitiation for the sins of the World) will encourage him to hope for Reconciliation and Pardon, if he repent and rely upon Christ ; and it will highly oblige him to both. Or, 2. In a state of Regeneration, and then according to that experience and proof a man hath of the truth and sincerity of his Conversion, such is the proportion and degree of his assurance and hopes ; which doth not exclude but suppose Faith in Christ ; for this is no more than to believe, that now his sins are pardon'd, his prayers heard, his services accepted, and he shall at last be rewarded, (if he persevere unto the end) in and through Christ. Or, 3. in a state

The different use of Faith in different States.

of

of *Relapse*; and even here, he hath yet hopes, (if he repent) through the blood of Christ. For this is frequently asserted in Scripture. I'll urge but one place, 1 *Job.* 2. 1, 2. *My little Children, (regenerate certainly) these thing write I unto you, that ye sin not; and if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins,* that by these sins are not understood the unavoidable *frailties and imperfections* of the best men, but plain and manifest transgressions of the Law, is plain, 1. From hence, That this is the general notion of sin in this Epistle. 2. From the manner of speaking, *that ye sin not; If any man sin:* which cannot be sence if applied to the unavoidable errors and imperfections of the best of men. 3. They are here said to be of the number of those sins for Which Christ shed his bloud, and are equall'd with the sins of the rest of the World.

And besides these Three uses of Faith I know none: Nor what more can be attributed to, or desired from the blood of Christ, I cannot see; unless men will wilfully

wilfully abuse their Faith into an impunity and patronage for sin, or what disparagement it can reflect upon this Sacrifice of Christ, that it obligeth us to Holiness, and rescues us from the power as well as guilt of sin, I am not able to comprehend ; as to the silly scandal of *trusting in Works*, they that know what these words or terms (*Justified by Works, and justified by Repentance and Faith*) mean, know that the one implies a perfect contradiction to the other, for the former denies any sin or iniquity, and the latter doth directly suppose it.

4. "Without some degrees of Faith, it The Necessity of Faith.
" is impossible that a wicked man should
" be awaken'd into any serious sense of his
" condition, or should be induc'd to set
" himself in good earnest to please and obey
" God; without a good measure of
" this Faith, the very Regenerate will never
" be able to conquer the World, and
" subdue the Flesh, and enter into their
" rest, I mean with the Apostle a rest
" from sin, for their endeavours will be
" but weak and languishing; their prayers
" cold and faint; the acts and instances
" ces

" ces of Religion will be undertaken as
" a Duty of *necessity*, not *delight*; the
" whole *progress* of their Christian War-
" fare, will, like the driving of Phara-
" oh's Chariots when the Wheels were off,
" be slow and uneasie; they will be liable
" to frequent *relapses*; their *Life* will not
" be a firm Peace, but an *unsteady truce*
" with Conscience: And their *Death* will
" be mixt and checker'd with jealousies
" distrusts and faint hopes, like a Sky
" spotted with numerous Clouds.

" But if we arrive at a good degree of
" this precious Faith we shall be more
" than Conquerours o'er the *World* and
" *our selves*; we shall be plac'd above the
" reach of Temptations, preserv'd tho-
" rough the power of Faith unto Salvati-
" on: we shall be too great to be swoln
" with vanity in *prosperity*, or to be cast
" down in *affliction*; we shall find all the
" ways of wisdom ways of pleasantness
" and all her paths peace: In one word,
" we shall rejoice always with joy un-
" speakable and full of glory, and when
" our glass is run, and our lives spent,
" we shall be translated to the blessed
" Seats of Perfection and Peace.

5. For

5. For the obtaining, and improving, *Means of observing and confirming* of this holy Faith, it is *taining, preserving and increasing* necessary, that our Religion be not mere *Credulity or Custom*, but that we seriously weigh those two great Witnesses our Saviour appeals to for the proof of his coming from God, his *Works* and *Doctrine*; the *Power* of the one, and *Holiness* of the other, being sufficient evidences of his Commission from above: To which we must add the *Testimonies* God himself gave him from Heaven, his *Resurrection* from the Dead and *Ascension* into Glory; and all those mighty works perform'd by his *followers* in the virtue of Faith in his Name; and to be firmly rooted and grounded in Faith through these arguments, is that which S. Peter exhorts Christians to, *1 Pet. 3.15.* *Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you.*

2. By frequent Retirements and solemn and devout Meditation to acquaint our selves as intimately as we can with the glorious Truths of the Gospel of Christ, to draw the representations of them as lively as may be, and

to dwell and gaze on the things we believe, till the light of the understanding hath shed it self through the inferior Soul, warm'd all our passions, and the Body it self seem to relish and partake of the pleasure of the Mind.

The most useful matter of our Meditations will be, 1. The nature of the God we worship, I mean the glorious Attributes Mankind is most concern'd in, his Truth and Wisdom, his Power and his Goodness: And, 2. The Sufferings and the Glory of our blessed Redeemer, as the sole ground of inexpressible Comfort; as the most endearing obligation to Holiness; as the most perfect pattern of Virtue, and the most lively instance of its Reward.

3. We must add to both these means, incessant Prayers offer'd up with a fervent Spirit at the Throne of Grace, for considering the darkness and indisposition of our Natures, we have altogether need of the assistances of the Divine Spirit, and therefore

The

The Prayer.

O Eternal God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Author of all good gifts, enlighten my understanding, that I may believe thy Gospel; set at liberty my will, that I may approve and love the things that are excellent; that the belief of the Gospel of the Blessed Jesus may engage me to Love, Obey and Rely upon him; give me such a lively sight, and firm belief of the things not seen, as may raise me above all the corruptions which are in the World through Lust, and make me partaker of the Divine Nature, that so my Life may be full of Joy, my latter end of Peace, my Soul in its Separation of Rest, and my whole man in the Resurrection full of Delight and Glory. Amen, Amen, Blessed Jesus.

C H A P. V.

Of our Love of God. It is not merely an honourable Opinion of him, but a Passion or Affection. Love not equally sensible in all, and why. Of Spiritual disfertion, its properties, and remedies. The effects of Love. The Motives to it.

Charity or Love may relate either to God or our Neighbour. I will here treat of the Nature, Properties, and Motives of our Love of God.

*The Nature
of Love in
general.*

Love is not a mere *Approbation* of the understanding, but also an *affection* of the Will, (or Heart, in Scripture-phrase:) And therefore *Coldness* and *Indifference* in Religion, and *warmth*, and passion for the World, cannot be Justified by bearing our selves in hand, that we do nevertheless *Love* God, because we do *preferr* him in our thoughts above all things, and because we will not doe what will *displease* him; for the former of these may be an unavoidable consequence of a clear understanding, and the latter of an innate *Self-love*, which may be

be able to restrain us from the Commission of those sins, which we believe will doe us an unspeakable mischief.

These doe well in their place, and are presupposed to the Love of God, for no man can love God unless he know him; nor will any man make any distinction of *Good* and *Evil* (*i. e.* lovely or hateful by consequence) unless he love himself; but yet these are apparently distinguishable from, and can stand separately and alone without the love of God; and therefore let none deceive themselves, for *To love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our Soul, and with all our strength, and with all our mind*, is something more, than to entertain an honourable *opinion* of him, or to avoid affronting him, because he is able to punish us; the Scripture expresses this love by *Delight* and *Joy*, by *Desire* and *Longing*; *Hungering*, *Thirsting*, *Seeking*, and the like; and more fully; if we love God above all things, our hearts will be where our Treasure is; our affections will be fastned on things above; and our Conversation will be in Heaven, because our God is there.

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Now

*The Proper-
ties of the
Lne of God.*

Now we cannot converse with Heaven but by *Faith* and *Hope*, *Meditation* and *Prayer*. And therefore it must follow, that they who Love God must be industrious to improve these Graces, and be frequent in the exercise of these Duties, as the *Means* and *Instruments* of enjoyment: And,

2. If we love God we shall hunger, and thirst after Righteousness and Holiness, which beautifies the Soul, and render us like God, and therefore amiable in his eyes; and we shall delight in all those good and virtuous actions, which are the proofs of an inflam'd affection, and in dear us to God, *he that loves him keeps his Commandments*: and we shall hate nothing so mortally as sin, because it stains and pollutes the beauty of our Souls, disastes the God we love, and interrupts our peace and joy, and extinguishes our hopes: and, if this be the frame and habit of our Souls towards God, then because we cannot love or serve two such contrary Masters, as God and the World, therefore,

3. These temporal things which are seen will appear very cheap and inconsiderable

siderable to us, and our concern for them will be so cold and indifferent, that no change which betides them, no imaginary excellency that is in them, will be able to raise our Passions, to distract our thoughts, to abate our diligence, to divide our affections, and overthrow our Faith; for the love of God, the prospect of a more glorious life will have disarm'd the Glory, Beauty, and Wealth of this World of all their Charm and Temptation; and if so, how can we then be led captive by what we do not in the least admire? How can we be afflicted at the loss of what we do not value? or, Why can we not be calmly divided from what our affections have renounc'd already?

Vain World, adieu! I am above either thy *Menaces* or *Flatteries*: I fear nothing because I am at peace with the God I Love; and I *despise* thy gilded dreams, because the Love of my God swallows up all my desires, and I am content to have no portion but him alone: How my Heart pants after thy Courts, O God, the Holy of Holies, the Heaven of Heavens, where I shall for

ever behold thy face, and Reign in the Kingdom of my blessed Saviour for ever and ever! Now with St. Paul, *I long to be set at liberty, to be dissolved from this Body, and to be with Christ*, nor should I willingly stay longer here on Earth, but in *Obedience* to thy holy Will, and design of spending this life in *doing Service* to thy glory, and in expressions of my love, in *Longings*, and *Watchings*, and *Sufferings*. And when I consider this, methinks my Life's too short, and I shall go to Heaven too soon, and I could wish my Sun would stand still a little, that I might *doe* and *suffer* something for my Lord before I go to enter into his joy, and to receive a Crown.

It is true, these are heights of Loye, which all do not, though it were to be wished all could attain to, for we have need of sanctified passions to enable us to doe our duty with delight and vigour: But none are from the want of such degrees of *Ardour*, to conclude themselves, either wholly void of the Love of God, or deserted by him; for God is a Being infinitely above our Conceptions, and that

that of him, which we do conceive, as *Power, Wisdom, and Goodness*, though amiable, yet are Spiritual, and not the objects of sense, and therefore do not move us with the same violence that sensible things do, whence it is easie to conclude, that our love of God is of a different nature from *that* we pay the creature, 'tis a more Spiritual affection mixt with Adoration, 'tis an awfull desire of pleasing and enjoying him, not always terminating in so vehement and *sensible* a passion as visible objects beget in us; and therefore the safest way is to judge of our state not by *transports*, but by the *firmness of our resolutions*, and by the *constancy and cheerfulness* of our *Obedience*.

But because as there is a more peculiar presence of God (as I humbly conceive evident by Scripture) so by consequence, there may be a withdrawing and retirement of that presence: therefore when I find my understanding dim and clouded, or distracted and shaken with suggestions to unbelief, my desires lukewarm and groveling, my Devotion faint and drowsie, and my communion without

without gust and relish; I am weary of my self, and I have no rest by reason of thy absence, O blessed Lord. Then first I lay before me my Life, and review my Actions, which are late and fresh in memory, and examine what it is hath displeas'd my God, and if I find the accursed thing that drove away a holy God, I cast my self down before him, and abhor and renounce it: But Secondly, if sin do not appear to me to be the cause of this indisposition and listlessness, then perhaps I have not been as watchfull and industrious to improve my Graces as I should; or if this be not it, perhaps 'tis but an *alteration in my body* that clogs and benights this Soul, and then I groan at the miseries of my Pilgrimage, and bewooan the infelicities of my Nature; but if none of these appear the cause, Then Thirdly, I rest humbly patient, waiting till God please to return to his resting place: It were Pride and Sawciness in me to expect my Heaven here; to be impatient, unless I live always in ecstasies caus'd by the Divine Presence: I will meekly set my self to my duty, and submit to his blessed Will,

Will, whether he think fit to Crown my Cup with over-flowing joy, and to reward my labour by inward transports or not.

And is it not fit I should thus love *Motives to Love God.* my God, whatever there be which can take and endear a rational and excellent Spirit is to be found in him: all the notions I can possibly frame to my self of *spiritual perfection and Beauty* I conceive, united in him; Goodness, Wisdom, Power, Truth, Constancy, are the Characters by which the Gospel discovers him to us, and these have unspeakable charms upon all ingenious minds, and they are intelligible enough to any that will consider them; it is true he is a Spirit, and so, incomprehensible to us in his essence, and therefore I cannot frame to my self an Image for my Love as one friend doth of another, but the time will come when I shall be Spiritual enough to see him as I am seen, and then my delight and Love will be proportionable in some measure to his beauty and perfection; in the mean time, my Reason as well as the Gospel assures me, that he is infinitely attriable, though

though that beauty be now a *Light, that is inaccessible.*

But besides this, that great character of *Love and Mercy*, (manifested in its most excellent lustre in the *Gospel*) is enough to endear him to us; He is not now our Father only upon the account of Creation and Providence, because he hath made us, fed and cloathed us; these are Common and trivial mercies compar'd to the Obligations of the *Gospel*, i. e. the Redeeming us from our evil conversation by the Blood of Christ, and the power of his Spirit into that holiness, which is his own Image and resemblance: The designing us for the joys and pleasures of his own Heaven; his readiness to pardon our transgressions; his care employ'd upon us against temptations, his delight in us, &c. If the World could shew us such evidences of Love, or could assure us of such an Eternity, if it could tell us, as the Serpent did *Eve*, eat and ye shall be as God: then indeed there were temptation in it, but till it does there's none really.

Besides these two considerations, of the amiableness of the divine nature in *himself*,

himself, and his goodness to us including his infinite power too, there is but one thing more which can be a proper motive to engage our affections; that is, that such an object be *lasting*, and this is the great prerogative of God alone, that he never changes nor dies, he will for ever be what he is now; *most perfect, and most gracious.*

The Prayer.

O Glorious God, it is the sole excellency of my Nature, that I am capable of loving thee; and it is my glorious privilege, that thou art pleas'd to suffer and admit of the addresses of my Soul; in this only I am a-kin to Angels. In those talents which serve only to the end of a corporal life, I am out-done by Brutes; O therefore give me grace to dwell as often as I can in the divine contemplations of thy nature, to look forward to that glory which thy bounty hath reveal'd and promis'd me; to consider by what methods of infinite Love thou dost prepare me for it; and let all this make me love thee above all things, and desire to know nothing but Thee

Thee my Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Amen, Amen.

CHAP. VI.

The Love of our Neighbour described. Charity consists in beneficence or forgiveness. Of beneficence in relation, 1. to our Neighbour's reputation, its Nature and motives. 2. To his Body, its Nature and motives. The excuses of Uncharitableness in this kind refuted. 3. To the Soul, its Nature and motives. §. 2. Of forgiveness, its Nature and motives. The Cure of Passion and Revengefulness. The Gospel motives to Charity in general. Inferences from the whole.

THE Second part of Charity is the *Love of our Neighbour*, of which now.

The Standard of our Love of Brethren, or a kind of Brotherly affection one towards another; the Rule and Standard by which we are to examine and regulate this Habit, is that love we bear Our selves, or that which Christ bore

bore us, that is, that it be *unfeigned, constant, and out of no other design but their happiness.*

The Apostle, 1 Cor. 13. taking Charity in a most comprehensive sense, as it animates all other graces, and influences all our actions, which relate to our Neighbour; doth thus divinely describe it. *Charity suffereth long and is kind : Charity envieth not : Charity vaunteth not it self, is not puffed up, doth not behave it self unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity (or wrong,) but rejoiceth in the truth (faithfulness or fair dealing,) beareth all things, (or rather covereth or concealeth, i. e. others Errour,) believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

But now to reduce all to fewer heads, and to consider Charity in a closer sense, it contains two things: 1. *The doing good to,* and 2. *Forgiving one another.* The things which are capable of receiving any benefit by our Charity, are our Neighbour's Reputation, Body, Soul; and therefore,

i. Charity

*Of charity for
our Neigh-
bour's Reputa-
tion.*

i. Charity secures Man's credit, by denouncing a Hell to the *Slanderer*, and *Whisperer*, and *Evil-speaker*. This Charity obligeth us not to give way to weak surmises, but to be forward to believe the best, in favour and excuse of an Error, not to proclaim another's faults, though true and real, unless the discovery may serve a better end than the concealment; which is, *that thinketh no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things*, in the Apostle; and if it forbid these sins, much more those blacker of open Slanders and private Whispers.

Nor doth this Charity oblige us only not to wrong our Neighbours credit, but as far as we can, not to suffer it to be wrong'd; to protect and generously rescue their Reputations from the jaws of the Persecutor, to awe and check the Slanderer by the Majesty of an Holy Anger, into Shame and Confusion; for otherwise we become accessory to those flanders we entertain and give ear to.

If we consider, that to blast a man's Reputation, is to render him the *Storm* and

and Hate of others, and a Burthen to himself, it cannot be that we should be willing to heap such killing mischiefs upon the Head of one we Love, and Charity is suppos'd to love all.

2. Charity ministers to the Body of our Neighbour; if we will act like men possess'd by that Charity, which suits with the Spirit of the Gospel; our Hearts and Hands must be always open to our Brother's necessities, our Souls must delight to doe good and to be kind; And if we are not able to redrefs their grievances, or relieve their pressures by our wealth or interest, we must ease them by our compassion, comfort them by holy advice, and succour them by our Prayers.

All that profess Christianity, believe this a Duty, and yet how great and numerous are the sufferings of the needy and distressed, and more great and numerous are the luxuries, and the wantonnesses of the Rich; but it happens thus; all acknowledge the duty, but shift it off by two pretences. 1. Their own inability. 2. The Demerit, or unworthiness of the needy person.

In answer to the first pretence, it must be confess'd; that it is not onely *Lawfull*, but *our duty* to make provision, first, for our selves and those who are more nearly related to us, but then, 1. The measure of this provision must be *our necessities*, not wantonness; for, if we refuse relief to the poor on this pretence that we cannot support our vanity, and gaiety, and their poverty together, undoubtedly we shall perish under the guilt of *uncharitableness*. 2. The present time, not the vaits fears of the future, must determine this necessity, for if we deny an alms out of our present plenty upon an idle fear of future want, it is so far from being a just excuse, that it is a double crime, *distrust in God*, as well as *hard-heartedness* to our Brother, contradictory to *Faith*, as well as *Charity*.

I will answer to the second pretence by degrees: and therefore, 1. Suppose the worth or worthlesnes, or what's more, unworthiness of the distress'd person, be onely *doubtfull and suspected*, then certainly it is not agreeable to *Charity*, to give up a Brother to ruise, upon a
vain

vain surmise; we are not to dispute their *deserts*, but to regard their *wants*; I'm sure this is the *safest* side; Charity may be *mistaken*, but shall never be *unrewarded*: we are herein (I think) to imitate that Wisdom and Goodness which dispenses the Alms of our Heavenly Father; he hath, no doubt on't, particular favours, as well as a particular kindness for the good and holy, but as he is the God of all, so those his benefits, which all stand in absolute need of, are common to all: But, 2. Suppose the distress'd person be really as *Evil*, as *Needy*; unless I am sure that my Charity will feed his vices; I cannot tell, though God hath pleas'd to pass a Sentence of affliction upon him, whether he hath appointed me to be the Executioner of it, by withholding that aid which may reprieve his Life; how know I but that in those moments I lend him, he may return to himself and to his God; nay, more, whether my Charity may not be a motive to reduce him; and happy I, if I may so cheaply bestow a double life of Body and of Soul, if I may so easily retrieve a Soul my Saviour died for, and

H 2 whilst

whilst I give an alms, in some sense, bestow a Heaven too!

But if those I believe should be the Children of my Father, the fellow heirs of Salvation, How happy an opportunity is put into my hands of obliging those who are so dear to Heaven, whose interest is so powerfull with the God I worship! Yet,

Lastly, in general, whatever the occasion be, whatever the persons; blest be the hour wherein I have an opportunity to evidence my *Love to God*, and to part with something for the sake of my dear *Saviour*! Blest be the hour, wherein I can lay out, the very superfluities of my trifling stock, for a Mansion in Heaven, for an abode in everlasting bliss; wherein I can honestly buy the Prayers of the poor, i. e. it may be the intercession of the blessed Spirit for me; however, they are Prayers which are very seldom insignificant, for if God hears when they curse in bitterness of Spirit, (when certainly 'tis his goodness, not their piety, which makes their Prayers heard,) how much more shall his goodness invite him to hear, when they bless, in the cheerfulness,

ness, and refreshment of their Soul. Lastly, how comfortable will my reflexions on my Charity be at the hour of Death, and in the day of Judgment, for (be it with an humble reverence spoken, though in imitation of my Saviour) how will *that Jesus whom I have fed, when hungry, cloath'd when naked, visited and comforted when sick and imprison'd,* ever give me up to an Eternity of flames!

3. But yet this is not the whole of *Of Charity for his Soul.*
the object of our Charity; there are whose Souls are poor, diseas'd, and distress'd, as well as bodies; And can an ulcer'd Leg, or withered Arm, deserve my pity more than a leprous soul? Can I chuse but melt and soften at a sight which speaks a *present*, and boads a *future misery*? Is the eternal welfare of my Brother grown so contemptible in my sight, that I'll not spend an hour or word to ensure it? Alas, how then dwells the same spirit in me which was in Christ Jesus!

Well then, I will go and visit sick Souls, I will prescribe, and press, and watch, and Court; and if I see them profligate beyond the hopes of recovery,

I'll recommend them, as I do departing friends, in Prayers and Tears to God; and whatever the success prove to *them*, it will be kind and favourable to *me*; Angels will offer up the incense of my Prayers, and bottle up my Tears as well as those spent on my own sins; and my God will multiply and encrease my Talents, when he sees that I spend them well; and the World will love me, and the very wicked will praise and justify my God, for these effects of his good Spirit.

*Of forgiving
Injuries, the
second part of
Charity.*

Sect. 2. But nature it self seems to encline us to these Acts of Charity, as far as they concern the Relief of the necessitous, the comfort of the afflicted, and Ministry to souls; nor can we share in humanity, but that we must partake of some degrees of, and aptnesses to Christianity: the most difficult part of Charity is still behind, i. e. the *forgiving injuries*, or more, the *returning good for evil*, and yet if we will be the followers of our blessed Saviour, the Children of our Heavenly Father. This is it that we must labour after, that our Souls may be so exalted and heavenly, so good and holy,

holy, that they may not be easily ruf-fled into peevishnes and frowardnes, much less rankle into a settled malice, and a resolv'd revenge, but that they may be all calm and smoothnes, all Love and sweetnes.

Then indeed we may think our selves the Children of God, when we can look upon injuries done us with the *mildness*, which arises from a sense of our own *frailties*; with a *meekness*, which is grounded upon our own *worth-lessnes*, with a *compos'dnes* of mind, which remits all to an Almighty and wise God; and with a *compassion* which the *consideration* of their folly, and sin doth awaken in us: when we can have the *Charity* to believe a just cause of mens actions *conceal'd*, though we can discover none: or if the malice be as plain and evident as the wrong, then if we can pray for those who curse us, honour and Love those who treat us with despight and scorn, if we can support the interest, and buoy up the reputation of those who have us'd us shamefully and ungratefully, after we have lov'd, and after we have serv'd them; if we can doe

this, then indeed the Spirit of the Gospel, a Spirit of Peace and Love abides in us.

*Motives to
forgiveness.*

And that I may arrive at this perfection, I reason thus with my self.

"Tis true he hath wrong'd me, but unless it were for conquering wrongs, "What need have I of Christian patience! Where is the meekness of the Christian spirit, if I am hurried away by the same passion with an Heathen and Infidel! I look for my reward from God, not Man, and therefore I am not at all concern'd, that he doth not requite my kindness by gratitude in his behaviour. I am the disciple of Christ, who laid down his life for his Enemies, and the Child of that God, who is kind even to Rebels and Sinners, and why should I think it enough to divide my kindnesses onely amongst my friends? I am press'd by the Conscience of a duty, and I do not so much mind an injury, as in what manner I am oblig'd to receive it lest I transgress as much by impatience, as mine enemy hath done by injustice. I love my own peace and rest, and would not be disorder'd, and breed

"a

" a storm and tempest in my bosom :
" For why should I be so foolish, as to
" transform another man's *sin* into my
" punishment ? And lastly, I am now up-
" on my journey, and am hastening to-
" ward my Heaven, and I would not be
" stopp'd and detain'd in my way, much
" less turn'd out of it, by the fillipps and
" impertinence of a trifling sinner.

And besides all this, I consider, that these men who wrong me, though thus unkind and unjust, they are yet my Brethren, the workmanship of my Father's hands, the purchase of my dear Lord and Master's bloud, partakers of the same promise, and Salvation, (unless they receive the Grace of God in vain,) and how can I doe any thing to them but pray for them, and bless them ?

Yet after all, being still but mortal, *Remedies of Anger.*
but flesh and bloud, some little aptnes-
ses to impatience, and revenge may re-
main in me, and therefore if at any time
my bloud begin to *Chafe*, my Choler
boil, my Spirits chill with envy, or muti-
ny with despite : I retire from the pro-
voking object to my God, and am not at
rest till I have laid the evil spirit, till I
have

have stisled the ship in its first throes and pangs; I bemoan my unhappy nature, and blush at my own weaknesses, and strive, and meditate, and read, and pray, till my Tears refresh me, and my repentance ease me; and upon this sometimes I find an extraordinary calm and light-somnesse ensue, such as I fancie that of the demoneack, when the ill spirit was cast out, or of one suddenly cur'd of a disease by the Almighтинels of our Saviour's word; sometimes I continue a little heavy and oppress'd, as when the ill spirit went out, yet so as to rend the man, and then (not leaving off, but in ejaculations repeating my instances to God,) I betake my self to something which may divert my thoughts, and deceive my pain.

Secondly, In the survey of my daily Deportment, which I make each night, I drag forth the Crime into the awfull presence of an holy God; and there arraigning it of all the *mischiefs* it hath done me, of all the *troubles* it hath given me, and laying before my self seriously and devoutly all the obligations I have to the practice of the contrary virtue,

tue, I condemn it, with an holy indignation, I cover my self with shame and sorrow, and renew most solemn resolutions against it, and earnestly beg of God his Assistance against his and mine enemy.

This is a method which will undoubtedly lead us to a most certain conquest, for it doth naturally tend to *soften and calm* the mind, to possess it with greater degrees of *meekness*, and deeper *aversions* for causeless wrath, and it sets the Soul upon its *Watch and Guard*, so that it cannot be frequently surpriz'd into passion; and lastly, it engages the *Divine Spirit* in the quarrel, which sure is no impotent assistance:

And therefore I cannot for my life reconcile this deportment each night, with a repeated frowardness and peevishnes each day, much less with anger digested into a sullen hatred; such (I am afraid) do not *strive*, and therefore they do not *conquer*; they neglect the means God prescribes them, and therefore he doth not vouchsafe to relieve them; either they do not at all examine and repent in the presence of God; or else they doe it transiently.

transiently and perfunctorily ; or else they *Love* the sin, and therefore *conceal* and *shelter* it ; or else they are *fond* and *partial* to themselves, and therefore *cover* and *excuse* it ; and any of these faults is enough to undo them.

*Motives to
Charity in ge-
neral.*

Having taken this survey of Charity, it is now time in the last place to consider by what powerfull motives the Gospel obligeth us to this duty.

1. The first may be taken from the nature of *Charity* it self. It is remarkable, that St. Paul, 1 Cor. 13. Designing to prove the excellence of Charity above any other spiritual gifts, thought it enough to describe it ; for no body can know what it is, and not presently discern how usefull and serviceable it is, to the happiness of mankind ; the pleasures of the *Rich*, and comforts of the *Poor* ; the safety of *Government*, the peace of *Families*, and the delight of *Friendships*, are all built up upon it.

Next, *Charity fails not, but abides for ever.* ver. 8. of this same Chap. It is a virtue that constitutes a part of Heaven, and helps to make up the enjoyments of that state of most perfect bliss ;

and

and certainly if we could but imitate the *virtue* and *perfections* of Heaven, we should, in the same degrees, ~~in proportion~~, partake of its happiness too, and that which is one of the great ingredients of the pleasure of the other World, would, if practis'd, be no small addition to that of this.

These being the glorious consequents of Charity, it is but natural and reasonable, that we should love it as we do our selves, and pursue it with the same eagerness we do our pleasure and our happiness.

2. From the *nature of God*; who hath sufficiently manifested himself to the World, in all his Works, to be *Love*: *God is Love*. Of which, what more amazing instance can we have, *in him*, than his giving his Son to die for us, and pardoning us freely thorough his blood; and *in his Son*, than in offering up himself for us?

And because uncharitableness bears such a contradiction to his Nature, he therefore resolves, that no such monstrous and ill natur'd Creature shall enter into Heaven, and hath frequently assur'd us that *our deportment* towards

one

one another shall be the Standard and measure of his towards us ; If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses, Mat. 6. 14, 15.

The natural influences deducible from hence, are, That he, who loves God must love his Neighbour also, because he cannot be the Child of God, nor acceptable to him without sharing of that blessed affection which God hath for the World and though the provocation of a Neighbour may have very justly incens'd him into hatred and desire of revenge, yet he canpot refuse his pardon to the requests of a God who hath done so much for him, and of Jesus who hath died for him. And Secondly, if we cannot be pardon'd our selfes, unless we pardon others, it seems our own necessities as well as theirs engage us to Charity, for we are become both Criminals and Judges at once, and whilst we forgive others, we are mercifull to our selves, and whilst we revenge and hate others, we are cruel and barbarous to our selves.

3. The

3. The Gospel establisheth a closer Relation between mankind than that of Nature: by the communion of the same Faith, the same Spirit, the same Sacraments, (whereof one is but a holy league of Charity) and so in one word we are incorporated, and become all but members of the same body: and therefore, as in Joseph, nature prevail'd above the sense of wrongs, and rememb'ring not that they were his enemies, but that they were his Brethren, he fell upon their necks and kissed them, and wept through joy and tenderness towards those Brethren, who without the least softness or relenting had expos'd him, if not to a certain death, to banishment and slavery: so must we Christians, rememb'ring by what ties we are fastened and united, no more harm or hate one another than we would our own limbs, our own Bodies.

4. The Gospel convinces us of the meanness and worthlessness of all things here below, not only of Wealth, but even of Reputation and Life too (of the Body, the Soul's secur'd beyond the reach of man) and so makes it both the easier task

task to part with them in the service of Religion, and not so easie to ground the subject of a quartel on them.

5. It annexes precious promises to the performance of this duty, i. e. an assurance of Reward in this Life, and in the other, of happiness in overflowing measures.

By this time it is easie to discern,

1. What kind of thing true Charity is. How sweet and gentle, how kind and meek a temper it is: how beneficial to mankind, how delightsome to our selves, and how like God and acceptable to him it makes us.

2. What a Stress God lays upon this duty; how dear a value he hath for it; that Charity is the very Life and Soul of Religion; and that to be a Christian without Charity, is an unnatural contradiction: And therefore

It cannot chuse but raise my wonder, to observe, That there are a sort of people, who though they doe no harm, doe no good neither; who study nothing but their proper interest and pleasure, and so if just (which is the most) are far from Charitable; and yet they hope

hope to be sav'd. Much more am I amazed to observe, that there are another sort, who are mere Lions in their Families, Bears and Wolves in the Neighbourhood, and it may be worse in the State, who are bad Neighbours, worse Husbands and Masters, worst Subjects, and yet they call themselves Christians, which is for men, who are not fit to live on earth to hope for Heaven. And yet I still wonder more, when I observe, that there is another sort of men, who are great Devotionists, loog, and sometimes passionate too in their prayers (unless the passion be merely theatrical, which is not a settled affection, but the mere sally of a sudden heat) severe and grave in their outward deportment, and huge zealots for this or that cause, or particular doctrine, and yet they are froward and peevish, sour and sullen, and censorious, and covetous, and proud, and insolent, and disobedient, and yet these men are so far from calling into question their Salvation, that they count themselves Spiritual, and the especial Favourites of God, despising the rest of mankind, as carnal, moral, blind things; by what means they

they arrive at this dangerous state I will not now examine; but I will beseech all such to lay to heart these general truths; That he who *Loves his God, must love his Neighbour too;* *He that prays must doe good andc communicate too;* *He that is devout and zealous must be meek and humble,* and charitable and obedient too, or else their Religion is unnatural, their devotion a mere humour, or melancholy, or any thing but holiness; they are so far from being Christians, that they want some degrees of humanity, to perfect them into Men.

The Prayer.

O Most gracious and Mercifull God; enlighten my understanding, that I may know thee, and discern the loveliness and beauty of all thine attributes, especially thy goodness towards the Sons of Men; and shed forth thy spirit of Love in my heart that I may seek thee, and delight in thee, and make it my busines to contemplate, and to serve thee.

And may the example of thy Mercy toward Mankind, and me in particular, and the example of my blessed Saviour, laying down

down his life for his enemies ; enkindle in me such a true affection towards my neighbour, that I may love him as myself, or as Christ Loved me ; that I may walk as the blessed Jesus did, in abundance of kindness and meekness, and patience, and in all instances of an Heavenly Charity, and so may at last enter into that Heaven, which is the eternal abode of Peace and Love. Amen, Amen, blessed Lord.

C H A P. VII.

Of Temperance. A false notion of it examined. The true one settled, from the great end of it, from Scripture descriptions of it, from the Example of Christ and his Disciples. The motives to it.

BY Temperance is meant, such an Abstinence from the pleasure of the body, as the Gospel requires ; and therefore I will enquire,

1. What rules of Temperance it prescribes us;
2. What motives to the duty it makes use of ; and,
3. What method it enjoins for the attainment of this grace.

I 2 1. Of

The Common
measure or
standard of
Temperance
examined.

1. Of the Rules of Temperance.

The common Rule and Standard which most have made use of to conduct men in eating and drinking, &c. is the end of those acts, that is, the health and strength, (the welfare) of the body; but I have great reason to dislike of this Rule, for if it be taken in a strict and close sense, it lays a snare for mens consciences, and must reduce all to the mere necessities of nature, and, so many enjoyments, which are innocent enough, nay sometimes upon some emergences necessary, will be utterly sinfull; and Religion will be made a mere burthen and mens minds be fill'd with endless scruples; but if taken in as wide a sense, as some men, I see, understand it, it is apparently false; and I hope none will affirm that all those Pleasures that are not inconsistent with the welfare of the Body, are therefore not inconsistent with Religion, this were to open a gap to sensualit and unchristian freedoms; for I do not question but that any man without prejudice to the health of his body, may be guilty of intemperance in the true notion of it; that is, any man may eat

or drink to the enraging of his lust, to the softening and sensualizing of his mind, without the hazard of a Fever, or a Head-ach: On these accounts I cannot but look upon this Rule as very useless and improper, if not dangerous for a Christian, and a proper rule of nature, only in such a state, which hath no prospect of another life; and therefore I think my self oblig'd to inquire in the Gospel for a better. ^{II} I think then we shall easily find what it is the Gospel means by temperance, by enquiry,

*The true Rule
of Temperance
asserted.*

1. What is the end it aims at in enjoying this duty.

2. By what words it describes and expresses it.

3. The examples of our Saviour and his followers in this point. Likewise the motives it adds, and the method it prescribes; will serve to clear up its intention to us.

Of Temperance.

The great end of Temperance, St. Paul suggests to me, *1 Cor. 9. 25.* Every man who striveth for the Mastery is temperate in all things; the means are

then proper, when they are suited and fitted for the attainment of their end. And by this Allusion the Apostle intimates, that the end of our Temperance is a striving for the Mastery, that is, a Conquest over the World, and the Body; for the Gospel represents the World and the Flesh, as those enemies, against which the Christian is to be engag'd in a continual warfare, and tells us, that the lusts and pleasures of them do War against the Soul. Religion being nothing else but the Love of God and heavenly things, the Gospel endeavours all that it can to wean us from all fondness for, or delight in, the World and the Flesh ; it being impossible to serve two such contrary interests : By a clear consequence from all this, I conclude, that we are to endure hardship as good Souldiers of Jesus Christ ; that we are to abstain from fleshly lusts as strangers and Pilgrims. In plainer words; that
" that abstinence from sensual pleasures,
" which renders the body tame and go-
" vernable, serviceable to the Soul, and
" chearfull in the exercise of Religion,
" which doth enfranchise the mind of
" men

" men from its captivity to sense, which
" doth establish its dominion over the
" brutish part; so that the man lives
" the life of faith, and not of sense,
" is disengag'd from the World, and so
" ready to depart; is that Temperance
which the Gospel of Christ requires:
and by consequence on the other hand,
" that indulgence to worldly pleasures,
" which tends to pamper and enrage the
" body, to awaken our passions for this
" present state, to endear and recom-
" mend the World to us, to make the
" minds of men soft and feeble, heavy
" and sensual, to make our temper deli-
" cate and wanton, unable to suffer,
" and froward, if our appetite be not
satisfied, is flatly contradictory to the
Temperance of the Gospel of Christ.

This is a Rule, which if well consider'd, and conscientiously applied to every particular, will sufficiently conduct man in the paths of this great duty, and answer all scruples concerning the enjoyment of pleasures, whether they be real or phantastick ones. For is any Man such a stranger to himself, that he doth not understand the working of his

own Soul; that he cannot give an account of the passions which he feels, nor know by what methods he is betray'd into the Love of the World, and a decay of his Religion? Doth not every man feel, what kind of eating and drinking clogs the Soul and emboldens the body; what kind of sights or dalliance doth cast the poison of lust and ambition into our very Souls? Or what doth thaw and melt us, and make us Love and hate, delight or grieve, hope and fear like the Children, not of Light, but of the World? Certainly unless a man will impose upon himself, he must needs discern the birth, and growth of his own Passions, and discover the methods by which he doth insensibly degenerate into a loose, or cold, or senseless Spirit.

21. This Temperance is in general express'd in Holy Writ by Mortification, and Holiness; the former imports such a change in the body, as flattens and deads its appetites for the World; *I am crucified to the World, and the World is crucified to me.* The latter imports, an excellent and Godlike nature, a transforma-

tion of man into a Spiritual a frames, as man in this imperfect State is capable of arriving at.

And certainly, men thus qualified can not place their delight in the sensual enjoyments of this life, how innocent soever they may be, the World hath nothing agreeable to Souls of this Heavenly nature, nothing worthy of them: Temperance in the particular branches of it, is call'd, Purity, Sobriety, Abstinence, Modesty, &c. all which are to be interpreted according to the method of the Spirit, in a fence which doth not onely restrain the outward Acts, but also the inward passions of man, in a fence which doth not onely forbid the commission of gross sins, but also all tendencies towards them in the body, and in the soul: Conformable to this Doctrine were,

3. The lives and examples of the Holy Jesus, and his followers, (though peradventure it would not be altogether irrational to suppose, that the extraordinary measures of the Divine Spirit, in his immediate Disciples, and their conversation with the blessed Jesus, and afterwards the fresh memory of all his Power

Power and Glory, might render a corporal discipline the less necessary) I will not deny but that our blessed Master did often accept of entertainments, (nor did I ever design to forbid any such thing on particular occasions, which may warrant them) but it is easie to observe, how course, and plain, and sparing his constant Diet, with his Disciples, was; how frequent in his fastings, and his watchings, he was: As for his Disciples, after his departure, their lives were but a constant warfare, and the World, and the Flesh their enemies ; they Liv'd like strangers and Pilgrims upon earth, and their pleasures were altogether Spiritual and Holy.

These were the paths that they trod towards conquest, and a glorious Crown and I can easily conceive how their Life was fill'd with such Spiritual ravishments; how they long'd for the appearance of Christ, and how they left the World with such glorious assurances as that, *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the Faith* (all which may have regard not onely to his sufferings, but also to his conflict with the flesh

flesh too) henceforth, there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the Righteous Judge shall give me at that Day; and not to me only, but unto them also that Love his appearance.

But, how that softness of conversation, that full and luxurious feeding and drinking, that garishness and wantonness of dress, that sloth and laziness of Spirit, which is so universal in the world, can become the life of a Souldier of Christ, I am not wise, nor lucky enough to comprehend.

But I can now easily discern from whence it proceeds, that Religion seems so unpleasant a thing, and that men are so unwilling to depart hence into another life, it is because we are such imperfect Christians, and we live sensually.

Sect. 2.

It will therefore behove us, to lay to heart the great motives, by which the Gospel engages us to this duty, as,

Motives to Temperance.

i. The nature of our present State in this World. The poor soul lives in a treacherous Body, and a tempting World, both which conspire its ruine; and therefore



fore it must be upon its watch, upon its guard; it is not a time for mirth, and pleasure, and feasting, when the enemy hath seiz'd the outworks, and entered into the very Suburbs; the Soul is striving for the Mastery, and is it sense to arm its enemy, and feed it into a fierce and brutish courage, by indulging those enjoyments which are the food and fuel to its lusts? every sensual pleasure it indulges to the body, is a plain giving ground before the face of its enemy.

2. The reward of this Spiritual conquest, which is fullness of pleasures in the life to come, an Eternity of bliss and happiness; and how rational is it to prefer Eternity to a moment, and that exceeding weight of glory, and unspeakable, unconceivable pleasure, to the dreams and mockeries of this imperfect State? even in this present life, we think it becomes our wisdom to renounce trifling pleasures out of the prospect of greater: What a Discipline of severities did those contenders in the Grecian Games run through out of the hopes of honour and applause? from whence St. Paul excellently argues if they did this for a corruptible Crown (a

Crown

Crown of Thieves; &c How much more should the Christians for an incorruptible one?

¶ 3. The example of the whole Cloud of witnesses gone to Heaven before us, who profest in through this narrow way and狭窄ness, but especially the consideration of the crucified Saviour; for what have we to doe, who have taken up the Cross of Christ, with rioting and drunkenness, with Chambering and wantonness? What resemblance is there between his Crown of Thorns, his Scourging, his Agony, and the security and sloth, the gaiety and vanity of a sensual life? for shame, let those, who profess Christianity, doe something which may become men who have taken up the Banner of the Cross.

¶ 4. The great advantage and pleasure of the State of Mortification. 1. The Soul enjoys a more entire peace, a more absolute empire, and is not alarm'd by the daily tumults of Rebellious lusts. 2. It is become a fit Temple for the Spirit of purity to dwell in, for the Spirit of glory and of God to rest upon, and the consequence of this will be abundance of inward pleasure, of peace, and joy, and hope. 5. The

5. The uncertainty of the time of our Saviour's appearance to judgment; And who, that hath a grain of sense, would be surpriz'd by that day at unwares? Who would be overtaken by the Judge of the World, in surfeiting and drunkenness, or any other of the sinfull pleasures of this Life?

Sect. 3. As to the means of attaining Temperance, I refer my reader to the Section of Fasting.

The Prayer.

O Thou God who art a holy, and a pure Spirit, Sanctifie me in Spirit, Soul and Body that I may offer up my self unto thee, a holy, living and acceptable sacrifice! Enable me to fight the good fight of Faith, to take up the banner of the Cross against the World, the Flesh and the Devil; to imitate my holy Saviour, and his blessed Apostles, that having subdued the Flesh, and conquer'd the World, I may enjoy a more entire peace, and pleasure in my life, and may at last depart with the greater chearfulness and triumph out of it, and receive from my blessed Saviour an incorruptible Crown. Amen, Amen, blessed Jesus.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Humility defined. Its influence with respect to three things, i.e. The Gifts of Grace, The Gifts of Fortune, The Gifts of Nature. The Fruits of Humility. Submission to God, Meekness towards our Neighbour, Peace and Tranquillity in our selves. A description of it formed from what is laid down before. The Application of the whole. Motives to Humility.

THIS is the Ornament and Guard of all our Graces, that which sets off and illustrates all our excellencies, and keeps us upon our Watch to secure them; it is both the foundation and perfection of all vertue; even holiness and goodness without it would be unacceptable to God; and therefore it is well worth your consideration in the next place.

Humility is a mean opinion, or rather the true knowledge of our selves, a sober contemplation of our infirmities, and a real persuasion of our imperfection: which is St. Paul's sobriety of Spirit, or humility

*An account of
the Nature of
Humility.*

humility of mind, contrary to the being puff'd up.

The fence of this shedding it self upon the will, renders men modest in their desires, and humble in their deportment, which is that other part of humility, whereby a man is enabled to reject praise and honour; and to debase himself to the meanest offices; thus the blessed Jesus, (though sensible of no meannels besides that of his humane nature it self, yet) sought not his own honour, and he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.

*The occasions
of Pride re-
moved.*

There are three things which are liable to be made the grounds of pride, "the gifts of Grace, of Nature, and of Fortune; but the humble man, In respect of the gifts of Grace, looks not upon what he hath attain'd, but what is still before; he pays his sacrifice of honour, not to that earthen vessel, which contains the treasure, but to the God from whose fulness it is deriv'd; he dwells not upon the pleasing spectacle of his good Actions, but mostly on the Catalogue of his frailties and his sins, and therfore rests himself on the Mercy of God through

*Y*ours affec
John Wesley

*Y*the

" the bloud of Christ, and from fresh re-
" pentances, he takes up fresh resolutions
" and Spirits every Day.

As to the gifts of Fortune, the World is too much a trifle in the sight of an enlighten'd understanding, to raise in a good man, any esteem or Love of it; and if so, a man can never prize himself for the possession of what he fligts; nor be proud of what he despises.

As to the gifts of Nature, he must value them, as they are the gifts of God, but he considers withall, that they are but comon ones, and are but the imperfect ornaments of this imperfect State, which must be done away, when we come into a better: and withall he reflects often upon his blemishes and imperfections, his follies and miscarriages; and considering how poor, miserable, and comfortless a thing he should have been, if abandon'd to the conduct of Nature, he lays his mouth in the dust, and at once admires the bounty and goodness of God, and confesses his own vanity.

2. The fruit of this humility, is an entire subjection, and resignation of ones The Fruits of Humility.

self to God, meekness and patience towards man, a calm and tranquillity in ones own bosom; for as to God, considering him as infinitely Glorious, and himself entirely dependent of him, the humble man composes himself to believe all he reveals, to obey what he commands, to trust in him, to attend the Decrees, and the leisure of Heaven, to suffer meekly, and enjoy modestly: As to himself, out of the Conscience of how little he deserves, he is neither ambitious of wealth nor honour, but he is thankfull for the past, satisfied with the present, and neither impatient for, nor distrustfull of the future. And out of a sense of his own indisposition to good, and the weakness of his own strength, he blesses God for the grace he hath receiv'd, and though he stands he takes heed lest he fall. As to his Neighbour, out of the distrust of his own abilities, the sense of his own infirmities, or else taught by the example of his great Master, who took upon himself the form of a Servant, the humble man is more forward to obey, than to command, to believe, than to dispute, he is

is slow to speak, swift to hear, not fond of opinions, but desirous to be enlighten'd by God and inform'd by man; and therefore on all these accounts, an humble Man can never be enthusiastical, obstinate or seditious, for he can never arrive at that height of Spiritual pride, as to conceit himself the onely favourite of Heaven, and fit for extraordinary illuminations; nor at that height of carnal pride, as to be a busie-body, a stiff assertor of his own humoar, or judge of his superiors on earth, and so think himself more fit to Reign than to suffer.

" In one word, Humility's whole deportment is sweet and gentle, its very Zeal is modest, its reprehension soft and timorous, its Prayers awfull, its reflexions mournfull, and its hopes of Heaven softly growing; it is neither severe nor peevish, obstinate nor hasty, bold nor selfish, insolent nor querulous, it can suffer its wounds to be prob'd and search'd, and kisses the hand whilst it loathes the sin; it doth not insult o'er another's errours, nor excuse its own; nay rather its modesty conceals its beauties, and blushes at the discovery

“ of its own excellencies; it never pro-
“ tutes to beg praises; nay, if it acciden-
“ tally meet them, it is rather burthen’d
“ and oppress’d, than puff’d up by them.
I will then account my self to have at-
tain’d to some degree of this grace, when
“ I can possess my Soul at rest, when I
“ delight in the milk of God’s word,
“ more than its heights and intricacies;
“ in obedience more than disputes and
“ fancies; when I can receive evil from
“ the hand of God, as well as good; when
“ I can sacrifice my own will to the ca-
“ price of a Superior, the obstinacy of
“ an inferior, or the humour of an equal;
“ when I can suffer wrongfully, and yet
“ meekly; when I can look upon the
“ glories and the power of this World,
“ and contentedly say, I am not born for
“ these, I am not call’d to the enjoyment
“ of these, but of the Cross here, and Glo-
“ ry hereafter; I am to tread in the steps
“ of my dear Lord and Master, and no-
“ thing shall make me have any other
“ designs than those he had; and when I
“ have done all this and am assur’d that I
“ love and serve my God, I rely onely
“ upon the Merits and Sufferings of my
“ Savi-

"Saviour for Salvation and a Crown."

This duty of Humility is the most *usefull*, and the most *difficult* in Christianity; "the most *usefull*, for it recommends us "to God, indears us to Men, and esta- "blishes a Peace and Calm in our own Bosoms: — the most *difficult*, for it is to renounce what is most near and dear to us, our Interests and Pleasures, our Reputation, nay our very Selves, our Understanding, Will and affections.

There are two mighty Motives which are most insisted on by the Holy Spirit; Motives to Humility. the one is, that Humility is the way to the increase of Grace here, and to greater measures of Glory hereafter; *God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble;* and, *He that humbleth himself shall be exalted:* the other is the example of our Saviour, who though so great as to be the Son of God, and to think it no Robbery to be equal to God, so innocent that he had no guilt upon him, none could accuse him of sin; so dignified as to be Prophet, Priest and King, did yet debase himself to the meanest services, on purpose that he might leave his Disciples a pattern to imitate;

though he were adorn'd by all that might give him a just claim to Honour, as Birth, Virtue, and the Dignity of the most Illustrious Functions; yet he was as much the humblest as he was the greatest, as much the most meek as the most innocent of the Sons of Men; and if he our Lord and Master stoop to low, what can we, who are at that vast distance beneath him, doe or suffer; that is capable of disparaging us? John 3:10
Besides these Considerations, it will be very usefull towards implanting humility in us, to know God and our selves: his Days are without Beginning or Ending, his Perfectionis have no Bounds; he is Independent and Inmutable; he is his own Heaven, and his own Happiness: but we are Dust, and the Sons of Corruption, born yesterday, and we shall die to morrow; our Bodies heavy, sluggish, crasie, beings of a few spans long, our Souls are blind and ambitious, passionate, foward, jealous, inconstant, foolish things: *these* are the seat or abode of numerous pains and diseases, *these* are as numerous, and as painfull passions: the World we live in is a mere phantasm

phantasm and cheat, that first invites, and then deludes our appetites; for enjoyment it self is but a dying itch, and the mockery of a waking dream: the time past reflects our sins and follies; the present is troubled with regret, and desires, and vexations; and the future will be what the present now is; for when all is nothing, what can be the end of our hopes and cares but disappointment?

And all this consider'd, is not God most fit to Govern, and we to Obey! he to be exalted; and we to be humbled! but why do I compare Man to God! let us compare him but to the Angels of God, and how inconceivably more excellent is their being and their state than ours? how wise and knowing! how refin'd and pure their substances! we see but thorough a Cloud, and are clad with an earthly Body; they dwell in the Circles of Glory, in the Sun shine of the Almighty's presence, and in a numerous Choise of the most pleasant and delightfull company. We in long Nights, and cold Winters, and barren Soils, and lonesome Shades, tir'd with sullen toilsome Business, and dull insipid Conversation,

and onely wait for the approaching Day,
and the rendezvous of blessed Spirits in
Heaven: *Lord, what is Man!*

The Prayer.

O Thou God, who refestest the Proud,
and givest grace to the Humble,
possess me with a meek and humble Spirit!
teach me to tread in the steps of my
blessed Saviour, to serve and minister, to
obey and suffer; teach me to know Thee
my God, and my self, that the sense
of thy incomprehensible Glory, and my
Meanness may level all my foolish con-
ceits of my self, and cloath me with
humility; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

O my God, make me resign'd and obedi-
ent to Thee, subject to my Superiors, mo-
dest towards my Equals, and meek to my
Inferiors! make me to despise the praise
and honour of man, being content with the
conscience of doing good! make me see the
imperfections of my best actions, and rely
upon thy mercy for Salvation, through the
blood of Christ, that my Soul may here find
Rest and hereafter Glory. Amen, Amen.
Blessed Jesus,

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Of Perfection. Not Every degree of faith Saving, but only that which over-cometh. Perfection what. Attainable in this life. The motives to it. Rules for Attaining it.

IT is an opinion generally receiv'd, that the least degree of true Faith will save the Soul: but I hope men mean such a degree of it, as overcomes the World and subdues the Flesh; for otherwise I should very much question whether it be not that seed which becometh unfruitfull, through the cares of the World, and deceitfullness of Riches, and the lusts of other things, Mar. 4. 19. If they say that that Faith which doth not overcome the World and the Flesh is not true Faith, it is as broad as long, for not to dispute whether (in the place mention'd) the reason of unfruitfulness was in the seed or in the ground, whether it be true Faith or not, I'm sure it

is

is not saving Faith, so that the Rule given us, whereby to discern and judge of our state, is a very plain and easie one, viz. *He that overcometh the World is born of God.*

If it should be farther inquir'd, how a man shall know whether he overcomes the World (though he may with as much lense ask me, how he shall know what he loves and hates? what he shuns and pursues?) the answer is very plain, *his servants ye are in whom ye obey.*

So that the whole state of this question may be in few words reduc'd to this. No man can be a stranger to his own actions, nor to the operations of his own Soul: *what man knoweth the things of a man save the Spirit of man, which is in him,* which words (if I have any Logick) contain two things. 1. That a man knows his own mind, or if he do not, then; 2. That no man else can; therefore since a man knows his own actions and his own affections, what he doeth, and out of what principles he doeth it, he cannot chuse but know who it is he obeys; but if his life be so various, so made up of vice and virtue, and the

flesh

flesh and spirit be so evenly poiz'd, that which hath the preheminence, whom he obeys be a matter very *doubtfull* and *disputable* to himself, then whether he shall be saved or no, must remain to himself, and much more to all others (God alone excepted) equally *doubtfull*; and I can guess at no other expedient for him, if he hath a mind to rid himself of this scruple, than entirely to complete his conquest over sin, and to shake off that Empire of sin, which it seems to me hath been too long and deeply settled and established; and to go on from one degree of grace unto another, till he arrives at *Perfection*: (which is the *only* method to obtain, that full assurance of hope mentioned, *Heb. 6. 11.*)

With which I intend now to close this first part of my Discourse *Of the Nature of Christianity*; because, though it be not a particular *grace*, it is a particular *state*, and therefore deserves a particular Consideration; and though we be not oblig'd to it upon *pain of Damnation*, yet we are invited and encourag'd to it by several glorious Motives and Enforcements, as shall presently appear; and therefore

What Perfection is.

therefore it is a Gospel duty. By Perfection (in the sense I now consider it) the Gospel implies a State of Grace arriv'd at its full maturity and strength, grown into *Nature*, and consummated into a vigorous and delightfull *Habit*; it being in this as in all other qualities, they grow up into Habit and Nature, that is, Perfection by degrees.

According to this, the Gospel describes this State by Manhood and a perfect Stature; and calls our procedure to it, growing, encreasing and going on; so that Perfection is nothing else but Faith, Love temperance and Humility in their greatest lustre and strength.

The effect of this State is, that the Life be not onely *constant, firm, even, and like it self*, but also *pleasant and delightfull too*; not onely that the man abstain from evil and doe good, but that also he doe both with *desire and earnestness of Spirit*, with *ease and with delight*; not onely that he doe good; but what is in its kind *most so*.

This is a State which is attainable in this Life, for the Gospel calls and invites men to it; and if any deny it, it is because

*Perfection is
attainable in
this Life.*

cause they frame to themselves another kind of notion of Perfection than the Gospel delivers us, which requires of Man no other perfection than such as is suitable to his Nature and the Assurances promised my God, and to this present State, never as much as dreaming that Perfection is the same thing in Man as in an Angel: and, (whatever men may talk) it doth not reckon the unavoidable imperfections and frailties of men for sins, at least-wise such as can hinder Man from being denominated, Perfect, witness the whole first Epistle of Saint John.

The Motives to this Duty may be compris'd under Four Heads, all deriv'd Motives to
Perfection. from the nature of the state it self. Perfection is a state,

1. More pleasing to God.
2. Of greater Security.
3. Of greater Pleasure.
4. Entituled to greater Glory in the Life to come.

1. More pleasing to God; if God Loves Holiness, (which no body can doubt) then every degree of holiness is a new charan, and what is most holy is most

most lovely ; and if so, every one that professes to Love God, must be oblig'd to aim at perfection, because he cannot but be oblig'd to please God as much as he can ; and he that doth not may justly suspect his conformity to the Divine Precepts to be rather Policy than Religion, and to proceed from a desire of his own safety, rather than the glory and pleasure of God ; unless a Spiritual prudence shall restrain him from attempts or vows of more heroical instances of Obedience, for reasons which Religion may approve of ; in which case it will be always necessary to observe this caution, that his choice of a lesser good do not proceed from any desire of gratifying the Body or from want of Love to God and Holiness.

2. Perfection is a State of greater security ; the more strong Faith and Love grow, the more faint and flat are all temptations that beset us ; a Soul which is devout and rais'd is not easily lured down by any of the flatteries of lust ; the Soul being long accustomed to rule, and the Body to obey, the Soul being us'd to spiritual delights, and the Body being

being now perfectly crucified, the Man is become a quite different Being from what he was, and therefore that World which did before take him, hath now no grace nor allurement in it; *I am crucified to the World, and the World is crucified to me.* This State is call'd in Scripture, *Wisdom, and Knowledge, and Strength,* which do intimate to us, that that World, which did before gain upon us onely by our blindnes, and our weakness, can now no longer prevail; besides this, the more like God we grow, the more dear are we to him, and become the more near and peculiar charge of Heaven, which St. Paul, Heb. 6. 9, 10. alledges for a reason, *why he was perswaded better things of them (than Apostacy) and things that accompany Salvation (that is perseverance) because God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of Love.*

9. It is a State of greater Pleasure: a State of Peace and Rest from sin; for the Man, having establish'd an entire conquest over himself, is not frequently alarm'd by the lusts of the Body because it is crucified; the Soul being rais'd, conversing

conversing in Heaven, is now too much exalted to be reach'd by the blasts of every temptation. 2. It is the nature of a Habit that its Acts are easie and delightfull; for Habit is but another Nature (so Holiness is call'd in Scripture a new Nature) and what is natural is pleasant; when our graces are full of Life and Vigour, when our sight is grown clearer and our affections warmer, and we converse with God and Heaven; then it is that we begin to enjoy the sweets of Religion, that we anticipate our Heaven, by performing His will on Earth as it is done in Heaven; Religion is at first employed in the unpleasant though wholesome Severities of cutting off right Hands, and pulling out right Eyes, Lusts become so natural they were become our Members; but afterwards, having conquer'd the World, his Commandments are not grievous, but full of delight and satisfaction; in Conversion, as in the alteration of an old Building, we first demolish those parts which are not Uniform and Beautifull, and this presents us with nothing but Rubbish and Ruines, but afterwards we raise up

an orderly, beautifull and lightsome Building, where we may solace and entertain our selves. 3. An exalted Holiness is not onely delightsome in the very acts and exercises of its graces, but in the fruits and effects of them; *Joy*, and *Peace*, and *Hope* are the natural consequences of this state of Perfection, and its Actions, because such a Man's Love of God is now so evident and manifest, he hath no longer room to doubt of it; and then what a ravishing pleasure must it be to be able to survey all the glorious Promises of the Gospel as such which himself is an Heir to? who can with full assurance think himself just upon the confines of Heaven, within a moment of entring into Joy, without a very sensible transport!

4. It's entitled to greater measures of Glory in the Life to come: Though the lowest degrees of future Glory be above the merit of the most holy Life, and though God may doe what he will with his own, so that the chiefest Saint could not have just reason to complain, though the meanest were equall'd with

L him;

him; yet it is plain that there will be order in another World and those Stars of the Morning of the Resurrection will differ in Glory, and this will be proportion'd to their Behaviour in this Life? *He which soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully, 2 Cor. 9. 6.* Is it not therefore highly reasonable on this account that we should aspire after the greatest degrees of Holiness we can, for who would not desire to be *as happy and as glorious as he can?*

It is now apparent, that perfection is a duty propos'd to us, upon very powerfull and glorious motives; for who that is wise will not take pains to arrive at that perfection, which is a State of greater security, greater ease and pleasure, more acceptable to God, and entitled to greater degrees of Glory in Heaven?

For the attainment of this State, observe these few Rules.

1. Believe a Holy, Just, Almighty God, every where present; *neither is there any Creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and open to the eyes*

Means of attaining Perfection.

eyes of him with whom we have to doe, Heb. 4. 13. Nay God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things. If Heaven be his Throne, Earth is his Footstool, and therefore walk not onely as preparing to meet him, but as already before him: this will awe a wandring spirit, and it will not be easie to fear and sin; it will awaken a decaying affection, and it will not be easie to love and omit a duty; it will teach us how to judge our actions impartially, and we shall neither impose upon our selves by fondness, nor doe any thing for opinion sake, when we consider, that we have God for a Judge and Spectatour. *I am the Almighty God, walk before me and be thou perfect,* Gen. 17. 2.

2. Consider frequently and seriously the Life and Death, the Sufferings and the Crown of the blessed Jesus; for his Life will convince you how lovely and pleasant Vertue is, although it seem to the World foolish, contemptible and painfull: his Death will inform you what Obligation you lie under to Holiness; for will you not love and obey that Saviour who hath redeem'd you by

his Bloud ? and are you not sensible that our heavenly Father is strangely in love with Holiness, since he doth propagate it by such a method ? his Crown and his Kingdom will breathe fresh Life and Spirits into your affections ; this is the motive which the Apostle , *Heb. 12.* makes use of to perswade us *to lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us and to run with patience the race that is set before us , looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith,* who for the joy that was set before him endured the Cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right Hand of the throne of God : for consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds ; upon the same bottom is grounded that exhortation of St. Paul, *1 Cor. 15. 58.* Therefore, my beloved Brethren, be ye stedfast unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

3. Each morning endeavour to fore-
see what temptations you are to en-
counter

counter that day, and summon up all the strengths of Grace and Nature, of Religion and reason, against the hour of Trial ; survey each part of the Fort, and having discover'd which is the weak place of the Soul, and most easily approachable, secure it by a strong guard, by arguments, and Prayers, and a diligent watch ; there are many things harsh to flesh and bloud, which are to be undergone for the sake of Christ, and therefore weigh well the strength of your own resolutions ; whether you are able to engage so powerfull an enemy as the World and Flesh : Thus our blessed Lord, when, *Luk. 14. 26, 27.* he had told them, that if they would be his Disciples they must bear his Cross, exhorts them to consider beforehand their engagement, and to see that their preparations be suitable to the difficulty, by the examples of a *builder*, who first setteth down to count the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish his intended building; *and of a King*, who going to War with another King, doth first sit down and consider, whether he hath strength enough to meet him : and

when you have done this, commit your self by Prayers to God, and then march forth out of your Chamber into the World, like a Souldier out of his Camp into the field, upon the day of batte].

And each evening look over all the passages of the day, and see how you have behaved your self, what victory you have gain'd, what ground you have got, what grace is most faint and sickly, and *always* close this exercise with a serious Reflection upon the nature of thy Life, how fast it steals away into Eternity; enter in fancy into the dark Chamber; and mark how thou must lie in thy bed of sickness and of Death; consider how all thy hopes and comforts, all thy designs and purposes, as far as they concern this world, must vanish like a dream: and think what need thou wilt then stand in, of all the strength and comfort which Reason and Religion, the Ministry and Prayers of thy Spiritual guide and Friends, and the Conscience of a well-spent Life, can furnish thee with; then thou wilt need a strong Faith, and a vigorous Love, and an entire Humility to enable thee to bear thy agonies *patiently,*

patiently, and part with the world chearfully, and meet thy God compos'dly.

4. Do not indulge thy self in the Enjoyment of the utmost liberty which is consistent with *Innocence*. Vice borders very closely upon virtue; he that will not be burnt, must not approach so nigh the fire as to be sing'd; besides, such freedoms do insensibly instill sensuality into the Soul, at leastwise if so thick an air do not fully the Soul, it is too gross and mixt to whiten and clear it.

5. Catch at every opportunity of a holy discourse, and learn to raise from every thing a Heavenly thought and to manage every Accident to some Spiritual purpose; embrace all examples of an Excellent virtue, and search after all occasions of doing good; declining by all the Arts of prudence and Religion whatever either company or discourse, whatever either sight or entertainment, may soften thy temper, thaw thy Resolutions, discompose thy calm, or allay thy heavenly mindedness, or endear the world to thee; Sin steals in thorough the eye or ear, dressed up in Beauty, Mirth, Luxury, but it wounds whilst it delights, and

it stains where in touches, and it captivates what it once possesses.

6. Be sure that thy Religion be plac'd in *substantial* and *weighty* things, not *fancifull* and *conceited*; for example,
1. As to *matters of Faith*, make it thy business to know God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, the riches of divine Love and the merit of Christ's sacrifice; and do not mispend thy time, nor weary and disturb thy Soul with Curiosities and vain disputes, which usually grow out of *interest* and *pride*, or an *impertinent* and *trifling* Spirit: 2. As to *practice*, let thy Religion be made up of *Fundamental Duties*, not conceits or will-worship; of *Charity* and *Humility*, *Obedience*, *Mortification* and *Purity*; pure Religion and undefiled is this, to visit the Fatherless and the Widows, and to keep ones self unspotted from the World; Religion is not a devout Whimsey, a sullen Austerity, or a blind and giddy passion, but all that promotes the Honour of God, the good of Mankind, and the peace of our own Souls.

The

The Prayer.

O Most glorious and Eternal God,
guide me, I beseech thee, in the
paths of Holiness; I am the purchase of
thy Son's bloud; I have known the truth of
thy glorious Gospel, and receiv'd the earnest
of thy Love, thy Holy Spirit; O grant
that I may not receive thy Grace in vain,
that I may not suffer wreck in the fight of
my Haven! But assist me by the might of
thy Spirit in the inward Man to perfect
Holiness in the fear of God, to go on to
the full assurance of Hope, mortifying
each day more and more the outward man,
and growing in all godliness and virtue,
and every thing that is praise-worthy;
that so the nearer I approach Eternity,
the fitter for it I may be; that my state
here being a state of Spiritual delight
and pleasure, each day may give fresh
vigour to my Devotion, so that I may not
faint till I enter into the Joys of my Master,
and receive a Crown. Amen, Amen,
Holy Jesus.

I have consider'd, i. Our Obligation to Religion, upon the account of our
own

own Souls which can neither be happy in this Life, nor that to come without it. 2. The Nature and Substance of that Religion we profess, as it regards either *Belief* or *Practice*; from all which it appears, that the Christian Philosophy is nothing else but a System of most exalted Holiness, such as may become Men, who are design'd for another life; it remains now, 3. To consider by what powerfull motives the Gospel engages us to duties which are so far above our natural state and strength.

Practical

Practical Christianity.

PART II.

*Of the Motives which the Gospel proposes
to Holiness.*

C H A P. I.

Of reward and punishment in another Life.

THE Motives by which the Gospel obliges us to Holiness, are,

1. The reward of Virtue and Punishment of Vice in another World.
2. The Consideration of the Divine Nature.
3. The Consideration of the whole History of our Saviour.
4. The Consideration of the vanity of all those things which are the temptations to sin.
5. The nature of Virtue and of Vice.
6. The assistance of the Divine spirit, and,
7. The

7. The Consideration of the nature of the Gospel Covenant which leaves a place for Repentance.

1. Of the first Motive.

The first Motive to Holiness, Rewards. Upon what account Life and Immortality is said to be brought to light through the Gospel, I'll not determine; but it is certain that the Gospel shews us how Death is abolish'd, and how Life and Immortality may be attain'd. 2. That it hath manifested this to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews; and that, 3. The Discovery of it is in full and clear words laid down in almost every Page of it.

The Wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the Righteous into Life eternal, Mat. 25. and Rom. 2. 5. there is a day mention'd, which is call'd, *The Day of the Revelation of the righteous judgment of God*, because he will then render to every man according to his Deeds, to them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for Glory and Honour, and Immortality, eternal Life: but unto them that are contentious, and doe not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every Soul

of

of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first and also of the Gentile, but Glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.

This being so, to sin must needs be so silly and weak a thing, no man of common sense would be guilty of ; for can any man of reason be at a loss in such a choice as this, whether he will live eternally, or die? whether he will be happy for ever, or for a moment? (upon supposal that sin could make me live one happy moment.)

'Tis true, if there were no prospect of another Life, no account to be taken in another World, the case would be much alter'd; For the Law of our nature being (I humbly conceive) nothing else, but the Law or dictates of Reason, and the busines of Reason being (in this respect at least) onely to distinguish between good and evil, our Reason would talk to us at another rate, because it would proceed by different principles ; good and evil would then peradventure be different things, for whatever would make for the pleasure and interest of this present State would

would be good ; and even pleasure and interest would not peradventure be the same thing *then* that *now*; for the Soul would not challenge so distinct a consideration or provision as now, for it would not be onely lawfull, but wise for it, to become *sensual* and *worldly*, and so, the same pleasure and interest would Minister to the happiness of Both Body and Soul. But now, that we are assur'd that we are to live to all Eternity , and that every action of ours hath an influence on that other life, we must needs conclude that every action is good or bad, wise or foolish, as it serves or hinders our happiness in that State to come: That this motive may have its full force. it will behove every man to take as lively a survey as he can of the joys and miseries of another Life: And, i. Of Heaven.

Of Heaven

It must be confess, that to be able to speak properly of Heaven, we have need, like St. Paul, to be rapt up into it; for the richest fancy would be but flat and barren in its framing any resemblance of the joys and glory of that place: they are unconceivable.

Heaven

Heaven is like the God of it, there is no searching of him out unto perfection, but yet there is enough of him manifested to prove him to us strangely amiable, and therefore I'll consider what is manifested to us of Heaven.

1. The place.
2. The persons, (for the objects, they will fall in with these) which constitute the happiness of Heaven.
1. As to the Place. Heaven, it is the sacred abode of God and Angels, and therefore it must as much exceed this World, as *they do us*; for no doubt on't the wise Architect of all things made each Palace proper and fit for the entertainment of that Family it was to receive; and indeed it appears to be a place fit for the Favourites of God to live in, for Heaven is a place of *everlasting life, and everlasting happiness.*

Heaven is the end and consummation of all things, all things will there be in their highest perfection which they are capable of; we are now the rough draught of what the great Artificer intends us; imagine to what glory we may be rais'd; we once were dirt and clay,

see

see now what comely glorious beings; yet we are to be refined much more above what we are now, than flesh and bloud is above dirt and clay; what difference there is between Time and Eternity, between corruption and incorruption, so much we differ in our existence and essence *now*, from what we shall be *afterwards*; for mortality must be swallowed up of immortality, and corruption of incorruption.

If Heaven be a state wherein all things are consummated, an end which hath none beyond it, then I inferr, 1. That there will be nothing more for us either to *hope* or *fear*, all will be full of *quiet* and *peace*, no passions there but *Love*, and *Joy*, and *Wonder*: *There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain*, Rev. 21.—2. Having obtained our *end*, we shall have no farther need of *means*, there will be nothing which is to be done merely for the sake of something else; as here below the covetous man suffers hardship, and the toil of constant busines, not because he loves trouble, but because he would be rich; the Religious

ligious man offers violence to his own body, not because it is actually pleasant to doe so, but because it is in order to a greater good; therefore there being nothing of this to be done in *Heaven*, all the business and employment of that Life, will be *delight and pleasure*; hence it is every where in Scripture described as a State of *Peace*, and *Rest*, and *Joy*, and *Pleasure*.

2. As to the Persons. I a poor creature of this World below, I who have felt the troubles of this mortal State, been tortured by the passions of Flesh and Bloud, Fears and Cares, Despairs and Hopes, even I am going to a Heaven, where none of these can enter, where I shall be made happy, with those enjoyments, which make God and Angels so, I shall be made *ἰσαίγγελος*, equal to the Angels in Heaven, how far above them in my happiness! For what a value will the experience of this World make me set upon the joys of another? the sense and memory of misery will make my Heaven double.

I consider that in that Life to come, we shall have Souls and Bodies, (though

M not

not such,) as we have now ; our Souls will be strangely raised and refined in their nature, and endowed with strange measures of knowledge; this compared to the other Life, being like Childhood to Manhood, *1 Cor. 13. 9, 10, 11, 12.* *We know in part, — but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away;* *when I was a Child, I spake as a Child, I understood as a Child, I thought as a Child;* but when I became a Man, I put away Childish things; for now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know, even as also I am known; I am not willing to inferr what kind of measures of knowledge this Text imports, to determine how well we shall be versed in the Philosophy of Grace and Nature, and the World above : how experienced we shall be in the Annals and History of this Life and the other; 'tis enough to say as the Text doth, that what we do see, we shall see plainly, not darkly; and what can we see in another Life, but God, &c. How rich a pleasure this will be, onely ingenious and excellent spirits are capable of fancying:

syng: all may be able to gues that it will be a most unspeakable pleasure, because knowledge is one of the Excellencies of God and Angels, and the delight of the wiser part of Mankind.

As for the Souls *Affections*, they will surely be settled on God, or whatever other objects there may be subordinate, they will be such as will become so pure and holy a Being: for the Appetite of each being flows from the Constitution and Nature of it; it now indeed derives mean and degenerous inclinations from its communion with the Body (whose contrivance is proper for the state it lives in.)

But when the Body will be raised a *spiritual glorified Body*, which is to be understood in opposition to a *carnal natural one*, 1 Cor. 15. a Body proper to be an Inhabitant of such a place, and to be a suitable companion to such a Soul, fit to comply with its desires, and in some measure sure to partake of its joys, which I may place as the first ingredient of the happiness of the

Body in that Life to come, *i. e.* As it here grieves and joys in the pain or pleasure of the Soul, so there it will much more: if the satisfaction of the Soul, now, do, by a happy influence, impart health, and chearfulness, and pleasure to the body, it will there much more doe so; because, being raised *Spiritual*, it seems to me that it will be knit in a *closer* union, and be more capable of those influences: but besides this, 2. It will have pleasures agreeable and natural to it self, which it will reap, 1. From the glory and perfection it possesses, which will be one peculiar to it self, and off a different nature from that of the Soul, thus in our Saviour on the Mount, (from whose transfiguration we may receive a little light) they were two different things, which made up the Beauty of his mind and of his body, Wisdom, Love, Holiness, &c. were the charms and graces of his Soul, but light, and glory, and proportion the Majesty and Beauty of his body: and since this body will be in its nature distinct from the soul (for though spiritual, it will

not

not be intelligent) therefore too it will have objects fit to entertain it; what those objects will be, that I'll not endeavour to discover, the Scripture doth in the general tell us, that the place it self will be fill'd with a mighty glory, that our conversation will be strangely delightful, that there are things *prepar'd for us*, (which are not therefore God himself) *which the eye hath not seen*, &c. (if that place be to be understood of the entertainments of another life.) But lest any should mistake me, I do not in the least dream of any *gross* pleasure: no, the pleasure of the glorified body will be as spiritual as the body, and no more; from all that I have said, I infer,

i. That the joy and pleasure of the Life to come is most perfect and Excellent for the more excellent the being, the more delicate and refin'd its pleasure, or else there could be no difference between the happiness of an Angel that's ravish'd with the enjoyment of Heaven, and a Hog that fattens in his stie and grunts at a full meal; and if so, how unconceivably great will our pleasures

be in that State, wherein the worse and meaner part of us, our very bodies shall be spiritual and incorruptible!

2. That there is no reason that we should be the less mov'd and captiv'd by the promises of such pleasures in another life, because they are pourtrayed to us in such an excellence, and lustre, as doth rather dazzle and amaze, than take and please us; for though now we are as far beneath them, as we are at a distance from them, yet then our natures will be made equal to them, and when we stand upon the same level with Angels, what makes up *their* Heaven will, constitute *ours* too.

And now, what can man fansie more than this, that our natures should be rais'd to the highest perfection they are capable of, and be entertain'd by the most glorious objects imaginable! there is only one thing more to be added, that this State be *Eternal*, that we not only have all which our hearts can desire, but also that we have all this for *ever* and *ever*; and this is one property of Heaven too, *the things which are seen are temporal, the things which are not seen*

seen are eternal ; now Eternity is a duration that never passes ; a stream of time which still glides on, and yet never runs quite away ; a day that never sets in any Cloud or Night ; a State of Life, which shall never grow old by time, nor decay by age ; a pleasure which will always delight, and never surfeit us ; a meeting of the dearest friends never to part again.

O my God, how unconceivable is the *The Influence*
Glory thou dost design me for, I can-*of the belief of*
not comprehend what I am going to
be ! and what can be the influence of all
this, but that I should count all the ad-
vantages of this present Life, dung and
dross in comparison of the happiness
of the Life to come ; that I should
count all the afflictions of this present
life not worthy to be put in the ba-
lance against the glory that is to be re-
veal'd ; how is it almost possible for me
to resist the charms of such a Heaven !
or not to despise *this world*, who have
the prospect of such a one to come ! I
need but cast an eye of Faith upon the
joys of Heaven, and it will be enough
to confront and baffle all the allurements

of flesh and bloud, and all the gawdy nothings of this fading World; one thought a day of Heaven, would raise me so far above all the fears and troubles, which distract and disquiet this present State, that I could sit with unconcernment, and see all my hopes and interests lost, and shipwreckt on the billows of an inconstant World, whilst I knew that my Heaven, my Eternity were sure; nay death it self, would be the onely thing on this side Heaven, which would be an object fit for my desires and wishes; What is it then can tempt a man to sin, who is thus arm'd? Who is proof against the flatteries or menaces of the World, against the soft addresses of a Wanton, or the impatiences and querulency of a weak tender body? What conflict, if *possible*, can be *difficult*, which is to be thus rewarded? Who can faint or languish in his race, who hath his eye fixt upon such a Crown?

The

The Prayer.

O Most glorious God, strengthen my Faith in the belief of the invisible things of another World, that it may enable me to conquer this! imprint in my Soul such a lively Image of that future State, as may make me run with patience and cheerfulness the race which is set before me! O let me not chuse my portion in this Life! Let me not exchange the Crown and Glories of Eternity, for the pomp and vanity of this Life! Let me not forfeit the pleasure and peace of that State of bliss, for the dull momentary Lusts of this mortal earthly State — but let me, who have this hope, purifie my self! Let me make it my busines to be doing thy Will, for which way can I so advantageously lay out my time and strength, as for an infinite reward? O my God, let these considerations prevail with me to live so, that when I come to die, I may have nothing to doe, but to receive a Crown, Amen, Amen, Blessed Jesus.

Of

Of Hell.

Now though a mere exile from this Heaven were Hell enough; and there needed no flames, nor darkness, to make that State miserable; for that there should be an eternal day, whose light should never shine on me! that there should be full tides of pleasures which I should never taste of, this is Hell enough.

Yet besides all this, there are real and endless torments to be inflicted upon all impenitent sinners, when *Christ shall come to take vengeance on all them who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The place is a Lake of Fire and Brimstone, of flame and darkness, which together with a worm that never dies, imports the excess of that torment which shall produce, weeping and wailing, and gnashing of Teeth.

The Company is the Devil and his Angels, the fearfull and unbelieving, the abominable and Murtherers, Whoremongers and Sorcerers, Idolaters and Liars,

Liars, and all the Enemies of God and Goodness.

The Duration of this State is for ever, as Eternal as the joys of Heaven, *an Everlasting Punishment, the Worm never dies, and the Fire cannot be quenched:* And though the Almighty may not be bound up to fulfil his threats (which whether so applicable to God as Man, I'll not dispute) yet certainly our Saviour and his Apostles, in giving us a Narrative or History of the different Issues of things, are bound to speak truth.

Hell then is a fixt state of misery, wherein men have bid adieu to the pleasures of Earth, and all hopes of Heaven; the memory of past pleasures doth but increase their pain; and what's beyond all the misery of this World, they enjoy not as much as the deceitfull Dreams of flatterings hopes. — Hell ! where there's no light, nor ease, nor God, nor any harmless pleasure to divert the pain a moment ! Hell, where onely the wretched Objects of an Incens'd God do for ever weep and wail !

Is this the Death which is the wages
of

of Sin? Can sin offer me any pleasure that can countervail this Eternity of miseries? Or is there any thing in poverty, or shame, or banishment, or death, equal to this Hell? if not, What blind brutish madness pusheth me on to sin? Can I dwell with Everlasting Burnings? Can I be content to live in an endless Night of pains and horrours? Adieu my fatal pleasures! I had rather starve and macerate this Body into sobriety, than by indulgence betray it to the rage and fury of Almighty Vengeance. I'll shut my eyes against all forbidden-Fruits, rather than for ever deprive them of the sight of Heaven, and close them up in an Eternal Night; Welcome whatever Penances Religion may impose upon me, whatever the World may threaten me with for the discharge of a good Conscience; I'd watch and fast till Death, rather than be *Damn'd*, I'd be the scorn and hate of *Mankind*, rather than of *God*. Are not these terrible Truths? Are they not arm'd with Lightning and Thunder, enough to startle the most hardened sinner? Good God, what makes the

the World so dead, so callous, that such dreadfull Objects cannot rouze nor pierce them! It must needs be, because they put that evil day so far off, that the biggest terrors of it look but like Motes at such a distance.

But surely we mistake our selves in our computation: we are now in *Time*; How narrow is the *Isthmus* which parts *Time* from *Eternity*? Or is there any Partition at all? but one groan that the frame of our Nature cracks with, but one parting *moment* wafts us over upon the shore of another World; Heaven and Hell they are not at the *distance* of so many *years* from this World, but just of *so much time* as will serve us to die in: And is this so much, that we should frolick and wanton in our sins as if we were not within ken of danger? there's scarce a moment in the day, wherein some Soul or other, in some part of the World, doth not make its *Exit* into another life; and shall I sin as securely, as if my *time* and *death* were at my own disposal? I came but a few years ago into the World, and within a few more I must go out on't; how soon this day will

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will come, I know not, I'm sure that the Sentence of Death is past upon me already, I onely wait the hour of Execution, which any trifling cause can be the instrument of; I may die of pleasure, or of pain ; I may die of want, or fullness ; I may die of desire, or enjoyment ; What is it then which cannot give Death ! the very height of health is a degree of sickness ; my Scull is weak, my Skin and flesh thin and soft, my heart tender, and my passions easie ; my inner part is full of strange mazes, vessels curiously contriv'd, and subtilly compos'd ; what a little will ravel this intricate contexture, and discompose this delicate frame ; and shall I be as secure, as if my strength were Iron, and my sinews Brafs, and the position of my parts fixt as the Decrees of Heaven ! — No, no, I'll live in continual expectation of my Death ; I'll examine the State of my Soul each Evening, and close my eye-lids, as if I were to awake next morning in another World ; I'll often take my leave of this World, and fancies I shall see this or that pleasant object no more, no more ; and I'll address my self to my God, as if my Soul

Soul were ready to take wing, and I'll soberly consider the *Nature* of my God, the value of Christ's *Sacrifice*, and the *Truth* of my Faith; and so I shall learn to disengage my self from this World, and to die *handsomely* and *comfortably*, if not in *rapture*.

The Prayer.

O Most gracious God, who hast hedg'd about our ways, that we may not stray and wander into ruine! who hast endeavoured to frighten us into happiness, by the dread and terrors of a Hell! O grant that this fear may be fixt in my very flesh, and produce in me a cautious and a wary deportment; that I remembering that our God is a Consuming Fire, may not dare to provoke thee to wrath and indignation against me! And grant, O most mercifull Father, that I may not put the day of death far from me, and flatter my self into security and misery, but live each day as if it were my last, because I do not know but that it may be so; that I may enter at last into that state where there shall be no more conflict with

with sin, nor fear of death, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C H A P. II.

Of the second Motive to Holiness, i. e. the consideration of the Divine Nature. Its Influence three fold. 1. It discovers the nature of Holiness, and Sin. 2. Evinces the reasonableness of serving God. 3. It fortifies the persuasion of future rewards and Punishments.

THe knowledge of the Nature of God is so powerful an enforcement to Virtue, and a deterrent from Vice, that *Religion*, and the *knowledge of God*, and *Irreligion*, and a want of that *knowledge*, are made use of by the Spirit of God, as expressions of the same import: as 1 Cor. 15. 34. *Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God.*—And this, not without reason; for the knowledge of God will,

1. Discover to us the Nature of Holiness, and of Sin.

2. It

2. It will convince us how reasonable it is that we should serve him: And,
3. It will confirm in us a full persuasion of the Reward of Virtue, and Punishment of Vice.

To this purpose therefore let us consider the Nature of God, as it is taught us in the Gospel of that Son of God, who lay in the Bosom of his Father, and hath declared him to us: And the first thing is, that *God is a Spirit*, Joh. 4. 24. and those Attributes which the Gospel assigns him, and which are a fuller discovery of his Nature, are *Knowledge, Wisdom, Holiness*, (under which may, in the opinion of some, be comprehended *Goodness, Justice,*) and *Power*, and *Dominion*. — Now from that resemblance which *Religion* implanted in the heart hath to these, it is call'd, the *Divine Nature*, and the *Image of God*; and it is highly reasonable, that the Worship should be suitable to the God it is paid to; and therefore the Rule and Standard of Holiness is the Divine Nature, and nothing else; the beauty of Holiness, and the deformity of sin is not to be derived, at least *primarily*, from the

conveniency or inconveniency of the one or other in this present life, but from a tendency to imprint or efface this Divine Image in us.

This is the way of our Saviour's and his Apostles arguing from the *Divine Nature* to our *Duty* thus, because God is a *Spirit*, therefore he is to be worshipp'd in *Spirit*, and in *Truth*; because he is *pure*, therefore they must *purifie* themselves who approach him; because he is *holy*, therefore his worshippers must be *holy* too; and because he is *love*, therefore they who abide in him must abide in *love*; all his Children must imitate the perfections of the *Divine Nature*; —— *Be ye perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect.*

From hence it is easie to discover, why the God of Heaven hath such an Everlasting Quarrel against sin, and why he delights so much in Holines and Righteousness: Sin embases the man, and depraves the Spirit which is in him into a sensual natural man, and sets him at the farthest distance from, and contradiction to God; but Holiness is a reflexion of his own Beauty and Excellency, it is the exalting man into a spiritual

spiritual and Heavenly Nature.—

This is a plain account of the Nature of Holiness and Sin, and why the one is so lovely, and the other so ugly, why the one is so dangerous, and the other so advantageous.

2. The knowledge of the Divine *shews the Reasonableness of serving God,* Nature convinces us of the reasonableness of serving God: There can be but two reasons for service; either, 1. *An Obligation to the person we serve,* and then our service is either *Duty* or *Gratitude;* or else, 2. *A regard to our own interest or pleasure.* In the knowledge of the Divine Nature we shall find all these Obligations to his services. If we consider God as that Principle in whom we live, and move, and have our being, Acts 17. 28. or as one who doeth us good, gives us rain from Heaven, and fruitfull seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness, Acts 14. 17. What can be more reasonable, than that we should be thankfull to him? but, if we consider him farther, as Redeeming us by the Blood of his Son, instructing us by the Light of his Gospel, assisting us by the Power of his Spirit, and adopting us

into the hopes of an Incorrputible Crown; What can be more reasonable, than that we should devote our selves to his service, and offer up our selves a holy, living, and acceptable Sacrifice to him? If we consider him as our Creator, and the Lord of Heaven and Earth, what can be more reasonable, than that we his Creatures should obey his Laws?

If we have regard to our own *Interest*, all our present enjoyments and future hopes depend upon him; to be guided by Infinite Wisdom, to be protected by Infinite Power, to be blest by him who is above all things, and can make us happy as he pleases, are things which a wise love of our selves would make us earnestly desire: As for pleasure, besides that which flows from the persuasion of all these advantages which accrue to us from his service, and besides the peace and true freedom which Devotion gains us, there is a strange pleasure in the contemplation of the most Excellent Being, in whom is united all that is any way taken with a Rational and Immortal Soul.

3. This

3. This knowledge of God will *confirm us in a firm persuasion of the reward of Virtue, and punishment of Vice:* Demonstrates the Necessity of Rewards and Punishments.

for whilst it discovers sin so exceeding hatefull, not onely upon the account of its contradiction to the Divine Nature, but also its base ingratitude and folly, and discoversthe Excellency and Loveliness of Holiness; it doth at the same time manifest the reason why God, who is a holy God, doth encourage the one by such glorious Promises, and deterr us from the other by such amazing Threats: for whether we consider him in himself, the purity of his own nature makes him love goodness and hate vice; and how contemptible were either his love or hate if happiness be not the effect of one, and misery of the other; or if you consider him as the Goyernour of this World, it is inconsistent with his Majesty to suffer the violation of his Laws without punishing the bold Offender.

So that now there's nothing farther necessary to work this perswasion in us, but that, 1. We should be perswaded that neither our *good* nor *evil actions* can

be concealed from him: And, 2. That he is arm'd with sufficient power to bleſs and reward the righteous, and avenge himself of the sinner; and both these Truths we learn from his infinite Knowledge, and infinite Power, both which we are abundantly taught in the Gospel of Christ to belong to God: *God is greater than our hearts and knoweth all things: Fear not them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul, but rather fear him which is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell,* Matt. 10. 28. And this God, thus knowing, and thus powerfull, without any respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work, 1 Pet. 1. 17.

All this now amounts to thus much, that Virtue and Vice are not *indifferent things*, but that the one is most *lovely*, the other most *loathsome* to God; therefore the one is most *fatal*, and the other most *beneficial* to its Votaries; for there is an infinitely glorious Being, who is most deeply *concerned*, and every way able to pour forth Blessings on the righteous and Vengeance on the sinner.

The

The Prayer.

O Glorious God, let my knowledge of thy Nature teach me to deny all iniquity, and to be holy as thou art holy: Let thy Goodness make me love thee, and thy Power and Justice make me fear thee, and let both wing my Devotion, and clog and damp my Lusts! Let thy Truth and thy Power beget in me a Perfect assurance in thee! Let thy Wisdom and thy Love persuade me to submit quietly to thy Will! that I may walk before an Almighty God and be perfect, and so may enter into thy Joys in the Life to come, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C H A P. III.

Of the Third Motive to Holiness; i.e. The Consideration of the whole History of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. The Life, Death, and Glory of Jesus considered. In his Life, the design of his Doctrine and the Influence of his Example. His Death considered as an Expiation of

our Sin, or an instance of his obedience; and the influence of each. The Glory of Christ, a demonstration and lively representation of the Christians future reward.

Our Saviour's Life a Motive to Holiness.

OUR Lord and Saviour may be consider'd either in his *Life*, his *Death*, or *Glory* beginning in his *Resurrection*; the knowledge of him, in each of these, is a strong engagement to *Holiness*, and a determent from *Vice*.

First, In his *Life*: And here we may look upon him with reference to his *Doctrine* or *Example*, both which conspire in this one aim, to implant *Holiness* in the *World* and to root out *Sin*; for look upon him with reference to his *Doctrine*, and we shall find this was the great business of his *Life*, to instruct men in the will of God, to acquaint them with a true and spiritual *Holiness*; for as the *Law* came by *Moses*, so grace and truth came by *Jesus Christ*, in regard of which he calls himself *the Way, the Truth and the Life*; and all this by Commission from the Father, *Joh. 15. 15. All that I have heard of the Father I have manifested unto you.*

From

From hence I may inferr, That the planting the World with Holiness was an undertaking becoming the Son of God; a design worthy of his Incarnation; the Jews vainly expected that he should have built them up into a glorious Empire, and secured to them the enjoyment of *Honour* and *Pleasure* in this Life; but since the meek and humble *Jesus* despis'd this as a trifling design, it manifestly appears, that Mortification (in him Self-denial) is above all the Romantick gallantry of ambitious spirits; That to be *Good* is somewhat more noble than to be *Great*, to *Despise* the World is more than to *Conquer* it; to subdue the Flesh, a richer happiness than to be able to careſs it with all the flatteries of Luxury and Greatness; and to *know God* and *obey his Will* a greater honour and happiness than to command the Lives and Fortunes of Mankind. — How can this Consideration chuse but beget in the minds of men a strange *Veneration* for Religion, and a Love of Holiness? Why should we with a preposterous ambition affect those fooleries of the World, and neglect true honour and happiness,

happiness, true greatness and perfection? though we our selves should not be able to discover it, yet we may very reasonably collect both the Beauty and Necessity of Holiness, from the *value* an infinitely wise God hath of it, which he doth sufficiently express in labouring the reformation of the World with so much earnestness; in employing so much care and so much wisdom about it; in making use of so glorious an Instrument as his own Son, *the brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person.* The works of Nature and Providence, together with that light he shed upon our Nature (being sufficient to work in us a natural Religion,) had left our disobedience inexcusable; when he added so many other miraculous manifestations of his *Glory* and his *Will*, and the instruction of Prophets, (authoriz'd by Miracles and Foreknowledge of things to come,) all this must needs render *them* to whom it was addressed much more inexcusable; and what shall we think of our selves to whom he hath, in the dispensation of the fulness of time, sent Jesus Christ

Christ declared to be the Son of God by *Power*, by the *Spirit of Holiness*, by the *Resurrection from the Dead*? God might well expect, as the Lord in the Parable, *Surely they will reverence my Son*: The greatness of his Person is very fit to beget an *Awe* and *Belief* too; therefore as the *Grace* is greater, so must the *Punishment* of its rejection: This is the conclusion St. Paul draws from the *Divinity* of his Person, prov'd in the first Chapter to the *Hebrews*. *Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip; for if the word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord,* Heb. 2.

If we secondly consider the Life of Jesus, onely as a great *Example* of the most exalted *Holiness*, of *Obedience* towards God, *Charity* towards his Neighbour, *Purity* and *Self-denial* towards Himself, we shall not onely find in it a clear

clear light to direct us in the practice of Vertue, but also powerfull Motives to ingage us to it; for if our great *Lord* and *Master*, the Son of God, did thus deny Himself and renounce the World, what kind of Humility and Mortification will become *us* who are so far beneath him, and in whom are such violent propensions to sin? how will it become *us* to walk, who profess ourselves the Disciples of so holy and so excellent a Master! we cannot be his Disciples, unless we walk as he walk'd; for this was it he aim'd at, to set us an Example, and the thing we are to learn of him is his Holiness: *If ye continue in my word then are ye my disciples indeed.* *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your Souls:* *he that saith he abides in him, ought himself also to walk so, even as he walked:* All which imports a necessity of our imitation of him, and implies our straying from his Example, to be an interpretative Renunciation of our Discipleship.—

Secondly, In the Example of his Life, we may discern the *Beauty* and the *Happiness*

piness of a holy Life ; how lovely, how great, how majestick was that Goodness and Innocence which shin'd in him ? and as a consequence of this Holiness, with what serenity and calmness of affections did he enjoy himself ? with what assurance of mind did he encounter all afflictions , and look forward towards another Life ? these are pleasures which all must needs value who can understand them, and all may enjoy them who will lead godly lives.

Thirdly , From him we learn how *wise* and *reasonable* a thing it is to pre-ferr all the hardships which accompany Religion, to the vanities of this World, since he who was best acquainted with the happiness of another Life, and could have commanded all the advantages of this, despis'd all the flattering pleasures of this Life ; and chose the Cross, and the afflictions of Righteousness, that he might obtain an everlasting Crown : Let us chuse as he did, and we shall never be mistaken ; nor let us be frighten'd at any difficulty, the *same Spirit* which strengthened him shall make us too Conquerours ; nor can the World menace

nace us with any thing worse than what he endur'd, *Want*, and *Scorn*, and *Travel*, and *Death*, a shamefull and a painfull death, — which is that which constitutes the

*Christ's Death
a Motive to
Holiness.*

Second part of the History of our Saviour, and is a very passionate invitation to Holiness, considered either as an *Expiation of our sins*, or as an act of his *Obedience to God*; as an Expiation, it must, 1. Plainly convince the World of the fatal, deadly nature of Sin; for when I see the Son of God struggling with the torments of the Cross, groaning under the pain of his Wounds, pale and ghastly breathing forth his Soul in the agonies of Death; I cannot think that the *Goodness* as well as *Wisdom* of the Divine Nature could have thought fit for Sin to have been aton'd by so bitter a Sacrifice, unless the weight and horror of it had called for such an Expiation; and shall I play and fool with Sin as a harmless thing, when its guilt cannot be cleansed but by the Blood of the Son of God? Surely the greatness of the Sacrifice was intended to intimate to Mankind the fatal nature of Sin; the

the bloud of Bulls and of Goats purifed the Flefh indeed, but to purge the Conscience another kind of Sacrifice was needfull, even the Bloud of the Son of God: I can easily read in the Sufferings of my Saviour, that the wages of sin is death, and sin is not grown less ugly, or les hatefull to God since the Death of his Son; *before the strength of* (*i. e. that which gives the fatality to*) *sin was the Law*, but now much more the Gospel; I mean not as the one was a Covenant of Works, and the other is of Grace, But as the one, *i. e.* the Law, had the Majesty of God stamp'd upon it, and so each transgression was an affront to the Divine Glory; this other, *i. e.* the Gospal, arms its Laws with a double Obligation of infinite Glory and inexpressible Goodness, so that the death of the Son of God doth exceedingly enhance the guilt and aggravation of sin, *and makes sin become exceeding sinful* — For, 2. To lay down his life thus for our sakes, to expiate our sins by his bloud, was an act of such amazing Love, as should transport us into a chearfull and ready obedience; *The love of Christ should*

should constrain us to live, not to our selves, but, to him who died for us and rose again: That the belief of his bitter passion for our sakes should beget in us no tenderness nor affection towards him at all, is unnatural ; and unpardonable, or that we should *love* him and not *obey* him is as unnatural ; but that we should be so far from loving him that we should hate and persecute him is a baseness I want words to express : and yet not onely Apostacy but any course of sin doth crucifie him afresh, and put him to an open shame ; for whoever is an Enemy to Holiness and Goodness, is so to him too.

2. If we look upon his Death as an *Act of Obedience to his God*, then we learn from it the indispensible necessity of parting with Life it self for the sake of those Truths we profess ; and that nothing ought to be so dear to us as obedience to God : — We learn the great Lesson of Mortification, call'd in Scripture, *being crucified with him, made conformable to his Death*, in the subduing all our carnal affections, it being highly unreasonable that we should expect an entrance

trance into Glory by any other path than that of Suffering, and unreasonable to expect a share in the *Resurrection* to Glory, if we do not first die with him.

3. His Glory is the Third and last part of our Saviour's History, which is *Christ's Glory a Motive to Holiness.* a powerfull inducement to Holiness; this begins in his Resurrection: Now the Resurrection of Christ from the Dead, is a very clear proof of our Resurrection, as St. Paul argues, *1 Cor. 15.* and so the great Argument to a good Life. A Resurrection, being demonstrated to the very senses of Mankind, leaves no excuse for sin; the wicked cannot flatter their Consciences into confidence by denying it, nor can the hopes of good men droop and languish through doubting of it: No, if Christ be risen, then there is a Resurrection from the Dead, and the same power which raised him will raise us too at his coming; and they who have done well shall enter into that Glory which Christ now enjoys at the right hand of God, as a reward of his obedience unto Death, *Phil. 2.* and all who imitate

his Life, shall in their several degrees and proportions partake of a reward of the same nature; for *we shall reign with him, we shall sit with him in his Throne*: And surely this example of the reward of Goodness cannot but commit a kind of pleasing violence upon the affections of man, and transport him above temptations; this was that Prospect which ravish'd the first Martyr into an Ecstasy, though on the brink of dangers and death, *Act. 7. 56.* Behold I see the Heavens open'd, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God: and if we could often lift up our eyes, and fasten them upon this pleasing sight, it would unavoidably raise us above this present World; we should not be discouraged at the poverty or reproach of our Saviour's Life, at the pain or the anguish of his Death, if we did but often contemplate the peace, and the glory, and the happiness which now crowns his Conquests. It is very true, that a Life led in *Prayers, and Meditation, and Sacraments, and an Abstinence from sensual Pleasures,* doth not appear very gaudy or taking to a carnal man; but if

if the same man could but behold one who had liv'd thus translated into Heaven, how would he adore the *wisdom* and *happiness* of the Saints! and how devout and holy, how pure and mortified would be his Life afterwards! It is said of the Disciples, who saw our Saviour carried up into Heaven, that *they returned to Hierusalem with great joy, and were continually in the Temple praising and blessing God*; a clear proof that there would be no painfulness in the *industry* and *fervency* of a spiritual Life, if we did often reflect upon the joys such a Life prepares us for; there would be nothing harsh, unpleasant or dishonourable in the *modesty* and *mortification* of a Christian state, if we did but look forward to the Crown and Kingdom it doth gain for us; who that had seen our Blessed Lord received up with glory into Heaven, would not have wish'd it had been his turn too, that he had *liv'd* and *dý'd*, *suffer'd* and *conquer'd* with him, and had been to ascend with him out of a troublesome sinfull World with Joy and Triumph into Heaven!

And thus now it evidently appears,

O 2 that

that every part of our Saviour's History is full of very powerfull Motives to Holiness ; that all he did and suffer'd tended *to destroy the works of the Devil*, and to implant Goodness and Holiness in the World ; and we must not think that a Design carried on by God in such a wonderfull manner , can be otherwise than strangely dear to him ; nor that if we through our obstinacy and unnatural disobedience defeat this Design we can ever escape utter Damnation , a Damnation more unsufferable than that of sinfull Heathens. Therefore,

The Prayer.

O Blessed and holy Jesus, grant me thy Holy Spirit, that I may lay to heart the instruction of thy Doctrine and thy Life, and may not onely know but doe thy Will; when I look upon thy crucified Body on the Cross, may I tremble at the guilt and weight of my sins which stood in need of so bloody a Sacrifice, and may thy bitter Agonies for me melt me into Love and Passion for thee, and this love constrain me to obey thee! O may I be willing

willing to Sacrifice all my Pleasures to thy Commands, who hast laid down thy Life for me! and being made conformable to thy Death, then I may look up with pleasure on thy Glory; and, Lord, grant that the hope of partaking in it, may make me purifie my self, and walk as thou hast done, in all Meekness, and Charity, and Faith, and Hope, that I may be fitted for those Mansions thou art gone before to prepare for me. Amen, Amen.

CHAP. IV.

Containing the fourth Motive to Holiness, i. e. the Consideration of the vanity of all those things which tempt us to sin.

A Man who should have seriously laid to heart the strength and importance of these Motives to Holiness (which I have consider'd) would be apt to think, that nothing less than some unimaginable temptation, or some unavoidable necessity in the contrivance of our natures, could provoke men to cast off all these Obligations, and break through

rough all these obstructions, that he might sin and die; but on the quite contrary (which doth strangely reproach the folly of the sinner.)

1. Those things which are the allurements to sin, have little or no temptation in them.

2. Sin it self is a silly base thing: And,

3. Man hath strength enough offer'd to enable him to avoid it.

1. The first I shall have occasion to consider fully in the third part of this Treatise, and thither I referr the Reader; onely by the way we must take notice, there is no more stress to be laid upon this Argument than it will bear; and that this Argument hath still respect to the joys and punishments of another life: the sensual satisfactions of Man are very little and trifling, compar'd with the pleasures of Heaven, and it can never be worth a Man's while to be damn'd for them; yet sure if there were no life to come, it would behove every man to be content with, and make the most of this: nor do I at all doubt, but that Men may manage their lusts so; as that they may

not

not be able to inferr Reason enough to relinquish them from any influence they have upon their Worldly interest; or if any one should think it necessary to purchase a pleasure by the shortning of his life, or the lessening of his Estate, I cannot see why he may not have reason on his side, for, *A short life, and a merry one;* and, *My mind to me a Kingdom is,* would upon the former supposition be wise Proverbs; for, upon this supposition, the pleasure of the mind would be very narrow and faint, and the checks of Conscience would be none, or insignificant: But as the case stands now, (though there be *pleasure in sin,* and *deceitfulness in lust,* granted in Scripture) to abandon the hopes of Heaven for some carnal pleasures upon Earth, is like *Esau,* to sell his Birth-right for a Mess of Pottage; and on the other hand, to renounce all present enjoyments for the sake of Heaven, is like *Peter,* to forsake an old shatter'd Fisher-boat, and broken Nets, a troubled Lake, and uncertain Hopes, for the assurance of a Crown and Kingdom, which is surely very reasonable.

O 4

And

And now I pass on to the second thing and fifth *Chapter.*

C H A P. V.

Containing a fifth Motive to Holiness, from the Nature of Virtue and Vice. Virtue renders man like, vice unlike, God. Thus Exemplified with respect to the Spirituality, Life, Power, Wisdom, Goodness of God. Application of the whole.

Holiness makes us like God ; Sin, unlike.

IN *1 Ep. John 1.* this is set down as the great Message which Christ came to acquaint the World with, that *God is light, and in him is no darkness at all*; and therefore they who walk in the light have fellowship with him, and they that walk in darknels have none; where it is plain, that St. John founded the necessity of Holiness in the Divine Nature; because God is holy, therefore he must first renounce his own Nature, e'er he can establish any Laws, of a contrary Nature, or love or hate on any other condition, than Holiness and Sin:

This

This being so, I think the best way to discover the Nature of Virtue and Vice, is to consider, how the one renders us like God, and the other unlike him.

The Account we have of the Nature of God, is, that he is a *Spirit of Eternal Life, Infinite Power, Wisdom, Goodness, Justice and Truth;* these are the chief of his Attributes, and such as Reason it self acknowledges to be the highest perfections and excellencies imaginable : If Holiness therefore tend to implant and improve some resemblances of them in men, and Vice to efface and extinguish them, it will easily appear how the one makes us like God, and the other unlike him.

I. God is a *Spirit*; it is true, that Virtue and Vice do not change the substances of things, and make Spirit Flesh, or Flesh Spirit; yet because they do so wonderfully transform things by instilling new qualities and so altering the operations of beings, they are in Scripture said to doe so: Thus because Virture raises and refines the Soul, frees it from those Fogs which a sensual dotage casts about it, scatters a new light upon it,

it, and mortifies those affections which reign in the body, and renders it more obedient to the mind; so that the man lives the life of Faith, as becomes a wise and an immortal being, therefore it is said in the language of the holy Ghost, to have render'd him a *spiritual man*: and on the other side, because sin doth stupifie and sensualize the mind, imbolden and pamper the body, so that the Soul seems to have chang'd its nature into flesh, and relishes nothing of those pleasures which are properly spiritual, but is wholly taken up with those enjoyments which are the proper and natural entertainments of flesh and bloud, not a Spirit; therefore sin is said to have rendered the Man a *natural and carnal Man*.

2. *Eternal Life* is the second Attribute of God; Life in Man, is either of the *Body*, or *Soul*; as to the former, Temperance, Employment, and a chearfull spirit, are the great Preservatives of Health, and the best supports of such crazy beings as our bodies are: Religion enjoyns the two former, for no Man can be holy without being temperate,

rate, and employ'd at least in doing good, and it contributes very effectually to the latter, i. e. cheerfulness of spirit, by begetting in us a peacefull Conscience, a resign'd mind and glorious hopes; but sin shortens our hasty days, by exposing us to diseases, violence, the Law; and by the ill influence which a temper'd mind hath upon the body; as to the Soul, Righteousness is the life of it, it is the nourishment and pleasure, the freedom and the security of it, but sin is the death and plague of it. *Non est vivere, sed valere vita,* It is not the mere existing, but the welfare and happiness of a being which is its life; and if so, How can a Soul which is sick of passions, daily tortur'd and distracted by an ill Conscience, be said to live? Besides, sin doth impair the faculties, o'er-cast the light, and fetter the powers of the mind, so that it neither understands, nor wills, nor commands as it ought to doe: it is rendred a poor, sickly, despicable being, and therefore the sinner is said to be *dead in trespasses and sins*, or at least (because the Metaphor is not to be press'd too far, as appears from

from the Text following) if it hath any life, it is as imperfect as that of a Lethargick drowsie body, all's a thick night and sleep about it: Hence is the address of the Spirit, *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead*, Eph. 5. 4.

3. Power is the third Attribute of God; Religion promotes even this in us, by inspiring the mind with courage and by the addition of strength conjoyn'd to it; Innocence makes a man bold as a Lion, it makes one dare and hope well, Religion is a confederacy with the Almighty, and he becomes the good Man's strength, *Psal. 18. 1. & 19. 4.* it creates an awe and reverence for him amongst Men, and it makes him approach as near to self-sufficiency, as the state of a Creature will let him; he is independent of the World, and hath not half the hopes, nor fears, nor cares, that the wicked Man hath; for this man hath an ill Conscience, and is therefore timorous; he that fears not God, dreads every thing besides; he hath many passions that are to be gratified, and therefore he is very dependent.

dent on the World; he lives ill, and therefore is the scorn of Man, and the hate of God.

4. *Wisdom*: The fear of God is the beginning of Wisdom; and therefore this is easily prov'd, for Religion is nothing else but the knowledge of the most Excellent Truths, the contemplation of the most glorious Objects, and the hope of the most ravishing Pleasures, and the Practice of such Duties as are most serviceable to our happiness, and to our peace, our health, our honour, our prosperity, and our eternal welfare; but sin, on the other hand besots, and infatuates the man, it makes him passionate and foolish, consult ill, and execute worse; he is blind to the most glorious Truths, and hath no taste or relish of those glorious Objects of another World, and he lives as if he were in love with ruine; and though he see death, and confess it in the way, he is spurr'd on by his passions, and dares not shun it; he covets mere trifles, vanishing fading pleasures, mere apparitions and dreams of happiness, and he flies from real and substantial delights

delights and satisfactions that would never have an end ; he trembles where no fear is, and yet is steeled and senseless against Almighty Vengeance ; and if this be not to be foolish, I know not what is.

The fifth and last now is *Goodness*, by which I mean kindness, and serviceableness to others ; this Religion so far advances, that each Man is so far Christian as he is thus good ; this goodness or love is the mere substance of the Gospel ; so that where-ever the Spirit of Christianity hath planted it self, the man is not onely just, but good and kind, he doth not onely put off revenge, and frowardnes, and hard-heartednes, but he puts on the contrary Vertues, Meekness, Tenderness, Charity ; his goods and life are not too dear a price to pay for the welfare of a Brother ; but sin, on the quite contrary, arms one Man against another, and sows nothing but dissention and ruine amongst mankind ; injustice, cruelty, rapine, murther, covetousnes, hard-heartednes, are the Characters which constitute a sinner.

Justice

Justice and Truth, which are Divine Attributes, are as essential parts of Holiness, as Goodness, and therefore need not be spoken to.

Thus you see how Virtue and Holiness perfect and exalt the Man, how it makes him more spiritual, gives him power, life, wisdom, goodness, allies him to the Angels, and makes him like God, but sin defaces all those Excellencies, makes him a mere heap of Rubbish and Ruines, a filly empty Creature, that the Spirit might well say of such, *Rev. 3. 17. That they are wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:* And who can now look upon sin as a little harmless indifferent thing? He that should rob the ambitious Man of his Honour, the covetous of his Wealth, the vain person of his trifling gait, should be thought to have committed an unpardonable offence against them, and yet sure, power, and wisdom, and goodness, are things of far greater Excellency than wealth, or honour, or gait; they are the Attributes of God, the things that make him God, and when he pleases to communicate and impart

impart to his Creatures some, though slender portions of these, What can be a more fatal Enemy to the Creature, than that sin which spoils and rifies him of these? he that should stab the body, and through as many gashes as those of *Cæsar* in the Senate, let out the imprison'd Soul, commits no Murther like that of sin, which quenches in Man the spiritual life, and robs him of Eternity. O my Soul, doth every intemperate draught, every sensual pleasure, quench the light and damp the spirit within me, and yet shall I still go on! Is it so inconsiderable a loss, to change from Spirit into Flesh? Do all my sinfull passions for this World, Ambition, Covetousness Dotage, deface all Power, Wisdom and Goodness in me, and make me weak and wicked, impotent and foolish, and yet shall I still go on to dote? Is it so little desirable to be like God? Is it so inconsiderable a change, like the unhappy Angels, to fall from light to darkness? forgive me, O my God, I now being to see a horrour in my sins, I see its poisonous nature, and the mighty wounds it gives, and I will shun it hereafter more than

than Death and Ruine, more than the Sword, the Plague, or Famine; for I am well convinc'd that there is no^t thing so excellent as Spiritual Life, Peace, Power, wisdom and Goodness, and nothing can wound or blast these, but sin.

And if, Secondly, Life and Goodness, Power and Wisdom are such excellent things, How dear must they be to God? and how contradictory to his Will must be all those Methods which men take to deface them? and this he hath sufficiently taught, in that he hath thought it worthy the Incarnation, Life and Passion of his own Son, to root out and banish ini-
quity and transgression from the Earth, being things contradictory to his Na-
ture, and to his Design too in the Cre-
ation.

From all this you see, that Holiness is agreeable to the Divine Nature, Sin is contradictory to it, and by consequence, that he who works Righteousness is born of God, and he who commits sin is of the Devil; and that it is as necessa-
ry to be really holy, as it is to be in the
P favour

favour of God, for he cannot love the unholy, unless he can renounce his own Nature.

The Prayer.

O Thou God who art light, and in whom there is no darkness at all, a holy and pure Spirit ! how infinitely are the Sons of Men oblig'd to thee, that thou hast given them Immortal Spirits, and dost travel by thy Word and Spirit to form and fashion them into thy glorious Image, to make them share in thy Perfections, that they may do so in thy Happiness too ; O grant that I may hunger and thirst after Righteousness, that I may labour day and night; to water and improve those Resemblances of thy Divine Perfections which thou hast imparted to me by thy Spirit, that so I may, through Christ, increase in favour with God and Man; and grant that I may abhor those sins which efface thy Image, and debase my Nature, which render me a burthen to my self, the hate of God, and scorn of Man ! which make me unhappy here, and miserable hereafter ; Grant this, I beseech thee,

thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

C H A P. VI.

*Containing the sixth Motive to Holiness,
the Assistance of the Divine Spirit.*

I Do not think, that in a Discourse of this Practical Nature, it will behove me to enter into any Dispute about the strengths of *laps'd Nature*, about the nature and necessity of *Supernatural Grace*; I may, in short, affirm, That we find in Scripture sometimes the *birth*, sometimes the *growth*, sometimes the *perfection* of the New creature, assign'd to the Holy Spirit, as the great *Author* of it; all which doth not yet discharge Man from the necessity of exerting all the *strength* and *endeavour* that he can; for by those frequent Exhortations address'd to Man, we may justly inferr some *ability* suppos'd in him; and by the frequent promises of the assistance of the Divine Spirit, we may as reasonably infer *an impotence* which stands in need of this relief: and from all together we may

conclude, that the Spirit of God is so far forth dispens'd, as serves the *end* of the Gospel, and the *necessities* of mankind.

Our blessed Saviour, after he had deliver'd upon the Mount a System of the most refin'd Precepts of Devotion and Purity, Mortification and Charity, as if he had foreseen, that his Hearers would be dazled by the *brightness* of this Divine Image and look upon the Pattern as too high for the attainments of *Humane Nature*, doth close the discourse, First, with an assurance of a *Supernatural assistance* of the Spirit of God: And then, Secondly, with asserting the necessity of a *real* and *actual conformity* of our lives to those holy Precepts, *Matt. 7. v. 7, &c.* *Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be open'd unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be open'd:* Where our *Endeavours*, and the *Divine Assistance* are joyn'd together, as being both necessary towards the great Work of *Sanctification*; in the 9, 10, 11. *verses*,

he

he goes on to confirm them in the belief of this Promise, from the example of *Natural Parents*, who, though evil, have that Natural affection for their Children, that if a Son ask bread, they will not give him a stone; or if he ask a Fish, they will not give him a Scorpion: Much more is it inconsistent with the goodness of the Divine Nature, to refuse Man that assistance which is indispensably necessary to the propagation of Holiness; inconsistent with his Paternity, to deny his craving Children that which is as necessary to their spiritual life, as food is to their natural: If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts to your Children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things (his Holy Spirit, as appears from parallel places) to them that ask him?

And when he had acquainted them with this, I do not wonder that he concludes all with averring the necessity of Obedience to all those excellent Precepts, from verse 13. to the end; for in vain do Men quarrel at the purity of the Christian Doctrine, as if it were a Religion fit for Angels rather than Men;

in vain do they complain of the prevailing passions of flesh and blood, and of the soft insinuations of a flattering World: our ability to obey the Gospel, is not to be measur'd by the strength of *Nature*, but of the *Spirit*; that God, who hath call'd us to the profession of such *Exalted Virtue*, hath allotted us an *assistance suitable* to so glorious an End; so that these complaints are not the groans of a *Penitent*, but the excuses of a *fond and carnal mind*.

All this certainly amounts to a very clear proof of the *Necessity* and *Excelency* of Real and Inherent Holiness; for, to what purpose should we call down an assistance from Heaven? To what purpose should the Divine Spirit be powered forth upon Men, if either there were no *need*, or no *use* of such a Holiness, which he is the Divine Principle of; or if this Holiness were so impure and imperfect, that it were not acceptable to God thorough Christ?

And which way now shall the impenitent sinner escape Divine Justice? What Excuse can he frame for the defence

fence of his Impiety? he sins and dies, not because he *cannot* doe otherwise, but because he *will* doe so: he perisheth not through *impotence*, but *obstinacy*; and what punishment, think we, can sufficiently avenge a *contempt of*, or *despight done to* the Spirit of God? The *Gentile* is unexcusable, because he did not obey those Laws which his *Conscience* did dictate to him, though the Characters they were publish'd in were dark, the Motives to, and the Principles of his Obedience, weak and feeble, at least comparatively; What tribulation, and wrath and anguish then will punish our disobedience, who have not onely our duty openly *publish'd* by the Son of God, and inforc'd upon our hopes and fears by glorious promises and dreadfull threats, but also the Spirit of God promis'd to enlighten our understandings, to *enfranchise* and *strengthen* our wills, to imprint the Motives of the Gospel in more sensible Characters on our spirits? We must expect that our *tribulation* in the World to come will be proportion'd to our *obstinacy* in this, and the Anger of Almighty wrath will boil to a heat an-

fwerable to that infinite love and goodness we have despised.

The Prayer.

O My God, how reasonable is it that I should obey thee, since thou commandest me nothing but what thou givest me strength to perform ! I feel the weakness of my Nature, and the strength of Temptations, but this shall never discourage me ; through the might of thy Spirit I shall be sure to conquer ; it must be a weakness indeed which Omnipotence cannot relieve ; it must be a strange assault made by the World, which can storm that Fort which the Spirit of the Almighty defends ; and that Law must be more than Seraphick, which is exalted above the imitation of a Soul inspir'd and actuated by thee : No, no, if thou vouchsafest but one Ray of thine Infinite Power, I shall soon subdue the World, and mortifie the Flesh ; I shall doe the things which please thee here, and I shall obtain everlasting life afterwards ; which grant for thy Mercies sake, and thy Son Christ Jesus sake,

CHAP.

C H A P. VII.

Of the Gospel-Covenant, as it is a Motive to Holiness. 1. *The tender of pardon to the penitent prevents despair.*
2. *'Tis a strong Engagement upon us to love God.*

THe Covenant of Works was, *Do the differences
this, and live; Life was the re-* of the two Covenants. *ward of an unerring obedience, and Death the punishment of every transgression of the Law; so that by virtue of this Covenant none could expect to be Justified, but he who had no sin to be charg'd with; and therefore since there never was any such Man but Christ, Righteousness could not be by the Law, but now the Covenant of Grace is, Believe, and Repent, and you shall be saved; our sins cannot exclude us from Heaven, if we forsake them for the time to come, and relieve upon the Mercy of God thorough the Blood of Christ; for he died to this purpose, that every one which believeth in him, might not perish, but have everlasting life:* Which Mercy

p. 76. Mercy extends it self, not only to the sins which precede Conversion, but to those also which follow it, as I have before prov'd: Now the result of all this is,

1. That the overture of pardon encourages us to repentance.

2. That the sense of the love and goodness of God, obliges us to love and obey him.

3. The overture of Pardon, &c. Despair clips the wings, and cramps the vigour of the Soul; no man would be good, if he knew it were to no purpose to be so; For why should he deny his sensual satisfactions, if he could expect no fruits of his Mortification? But when the Almighty makes a tender of Mercy, and invites the sinner to be reconcil'd, what will not he doe who is sensible of the advantage of his favour, or the dreadfulness of his anger, that he may avoid the one, and gain the other! The trouble of a wounded Conscience is an uneasy thing to bear, and who would not rid himself of it, and possess his Soul of an entire peace, when he sees that he may? Who can be willing to be all

*The Tender of
Pardon a Mo-
tive to Hol-
iness.*

all his life in *bondage*, who may be translated into the glorious *liberty* of the Sons of God? Who would feed the slavish fears of an approaching Death in his Bosom, who may extinguish and expell them if he will! Salvation is not so inconsiderable a matter, but that every one makes this naturally his enquiry, *What shall I do to be saved?* and therefore when to do ones best is to do all; and to be sorry for our sins, is to atone them, (in the acceptance of God) who would slight the happiness of the Divine Favour, and Heaven, tender'd upon these terms? O my Saviour! thou hast indeed brought *Life and Immortality* to light, thou hast freed me from the curse of the Law, and thou hast open'd a plain and easie way to Reconciliation and Heaven, thorough thy Body upon the Cross; without this, the Contemplation of God's *Justice* would have o'erthrown all those hopes which I could have deriv'd from the Contemplation of his *Mercy and Goodness*, and I could never, without an affront to his *Holiness*, have flatter'd my self from his *Clemency* into the hopes of pardon, for those numerous

merous sins I have committed against my Conscience; For ever blessed be thy Name, that thou hast taken the weight and burthen of my sins upon thee! that thou hast *suffer'd*, that I might be justified through thy Blood: I will no longer *deliberate* whether I shall ease me of my sins and guilt, whether I shall be *happy* or no! I come, I come, blessed Lord, I renounce all the sins and vanities of my former life, and desire to devote my self *a holy living, and acceptable Sacrifice to God* for the time to come! For why should I any longer sin against so much love and goodness?

*God's Love
manifested in
the Covenant
of Grace, a
Met
time's*

— §. 2. *That the sense of the love and goodness of God obliges us to love and obey him, &c.* When I had broken the Laws of God, and given manifest affronts to that glorious Being, who created, and doth preserve me; when I had trampled upon all his Obligations, and abus'd all his Mercies into wantonness, without any temptation to it, besides the baseness of my own Nature, I might have expected that a just Wrath would have reveal'd it self in Thunder and

and Lightning, in Judgments and Death; but instead of that, he continues the overtures of his Mercy, and Courts me with the tenderness of an Indulgent Father: O my God, thou hast conquer'd me by thy patience and long-suffering, thou hast taken me by thy infinite love and goodness, I adore thy Clemency and Wisdom, and am ashamed of the wildness and extravagancy of my own folly! O pardon me, and my mourning and revenge shall witness what resentments I have of thy sweetness and tenderness; I will serve and love thee much, because thou hast forgiven me much.—Farewell my sloth and ease, I have devoted my self to my great Creatour, and I must redeem the time that I have spent amiss.—Farewell my sinfull pleasures, and my vain diversions, I will no longer indulge that Body which hath betray'd my God, which hath made me a Rebel against a gracious Father! Farewell my ambitious and vain glorious aims, these are not the Ornaments which become an *Humble Penitent*.

These, and such like Resolutions, are, I think, the natural results of a serious con-

consideration of the Divine Goodness, manifested in this Covenant of Grace ; no man can believe himself in a capacity of Pardon and Salvation, but he must naturally desire to be rid of those fears which accompany his guilts, and to be secur'd of Heaven ; no Man can see the Majesty of Heaven contending for Conquest over us by love and goodness, but he must blush at his ingratitude, and melt at the sense of the Stupendious Mercy.

The Prayer.

X **O** Glorious God, grant that these may be the effects of my knowledge of thy Covenant of Grace ; that thy goodness may lead me to Repentance, and that I may not, by the contempt of thy Mercy, treasure up to my self wrath against the day of Wrath : Lord, What should make me backward, if thou art forward to a Reconciliation ! What should make me refuse thy pardon, when thou art willing to bestow it ? Is it not worth my while to be sav'd ? Or can I be sav'd in despight of God ? Lord, I cannot be so blind to think

think so ; grant me then the Grace to re-pent to day, whil'st it is call'd to day, to mind the things which belong to my peace, before they are hid from mine eyes. Amen, blessed Jesus.

And now I have finish'd the second part of this Discourse, and consider'd all, or at least the main Motives to Holiness which the Gospel contains, nothing is here wanting, that can justly beget our *love or hate*, nothing wanting that can work upon our *hopes or fears*, nothing more to be desir'd which can *invite or incourage us*; all the Arguments of *interest and pleasure*, of *necessity and possibility*, of *obligations and duty*, are here combin'd and twisted, to make the Cords that should draw us strong enough, that one might justly wonder how any Man can resist the power of such Arguments, and how it is possible to be damn'd.

And yet we cannot see what effect Christianity hath upon the generality of Mankind; they are as loose as *Heathens*, as covetous as *Jews*, and in a word, as much addicted to the *pleasures of the world and flesh*, as if neither Life and

Immor-

Immortality had been brought to light, nor there were any promises of Supernatural assistance.

It will become us therefore, in the Third place, to enquire into the reason of this, and to discover those Temptations which detain Men captive to sin, notwithstanding all the Son of God hath done to redeem them.

Practical

Practical Christianity.

PART III.

Of Temptations to Sin and their remedies.

C H A P. I.

Of Pleasure consider'd as a Temptation.

1. The boundaries of sensual Pleasure.
2. Remedies against it.
3. Motives to abstinence where the emptiness of sensuality is fully demonstrated, from the nature of worldly possessions and of Man.

TH E Temptations to Sin are very numerous, yet they may be reduc'd to two Heads, *Pleasure* and *Pain*; for these are the great Springs of *Love* and *Hate*, of *Hope* and *Fear*, and consequently of all Humane actions. I will begin with *Pleasure*.



Pleasure

Pleasure is the Idol of Mankind, and not without reason, for it is impossible to love our selves, and not love our pleasure; and never any Man denied himself yet any the least portion of it, but in order to a greater; therefore though I first premise, *That he cannot be a true Christian, who is not willing to forego all his present enjoyments for the hopes of Heaven;* because it is inconsistent with a true Faith of the things not seen, but yet eternal, to preferr these temporal ones, because seen before them; and inconsistent with the truth of our love to God, to obey him no longer than he commands pleasant things: Yet because a misperswasion about this matter may prove a snare and a burthen to some in the practice of Religion, and deter others from it, I will enquire,

1. How far Religion is an Enemy to our Sensual Pleasures.
2. What Remedies it prescribes against them.
3. What Motives it lays down to Abstinence.

Pleasure, how
far forbid.

Sect. 1. How far Religion, &c. As to those instances of enjoyments which are

are forbidden, the case is plain; all *unnatural lusts* are a Species of pleasure (if they may deserve that name) utterly interdicted the Christian.

As to our degrees of enjoyment, in all the instances of pleasure which are allowed us, (and such are all our natural appetites) it is first plain, that all kind of excess is forbidden us; and in this sense the Precepts of the Gospel are generally to be understood; the Body we are to mortifie is describ'd to have such members as these, *Col. 3. 5. Fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is Idolatry;* —and to walk after the way of the Gentiles, or according to the World, is to have our conversation in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, which is call'd afterwards excess of Riot, *1 Pet. 4. 3, 4.*

2. It is not to be question'd but that the great design of Religion, is to raise our hearts upwards, to make us spiritually minded; and therefore all Sensuality, which is contrary to this, is contrary to the Analogy of the Gospel; and by consequence, I humbly conceive, that

an *immoderate love* of any thing, though an allowed instance of pleasure, is contrary to the Gospel of our Lord ; accordingly I find, that that enjoyment of this present Life which it permits to us, is such a one as is *cool* and *moderate*, not *warm* and *passionate* : 1 Cor. 7. 29. But this I say, Brethren, the time is short ; it remains , that both they that have Wives, be as though they had none, and they that weep, as though they wept not, and they that rejoice, as though they rejoic'd not, and they that buy, as though they possess'd not, and they that use this World, as not abusing it, for the fashion of this World passeth away. —— And now,

3. By consequence, whatever tends to the betraying of us into *excess* or *dotage*, is unlawfull, consider'd purely as the means to such an End. From hence we may learn, how little injurious Religion is to mens present pleasures ; we are allowed all things but *dotage*, *unnatural lusts*, and *excess*, and all these are contradictory to our present happiness ; as for *excess*, and *unnatural lust*, there's no question ; as for *dotage*, whoe-
ver

ver shall consider the emptiness and uncertainty of this World, must needs conclude, that the greatest security of our pleasure is a moderate affection; and bating now all these, the Gospel of Christ is so far from injoining us misery and trouble, that we are expressly invited to it, by this Motive amongst others, That *it hath the Promises of this life, as well as that which is to come;* and we are permitted to look upon *peace and prosperity as great blessings,* and we are allowed the delight of *Friend-ly Conversation, love without hypocrisy,* and to love our Wives even as our selves. So that whatever is necessary to make our lives comfortable, is not onely permitted, but promised us; but if we would make this *Earth our Heaven,* 'tis this, that is to be *Sensual and Carnal;* it is easie to apply these Rules to our Cloathing, Eating, Drinking, Conversation, &c. and they will make us wise and prudent Christians, and Religion will appear pleasant and delightfull.

There is one more limit affix'd to our enjoyments, and that is by *Charity;* we must take care our satisfactions, by

our examples, do not betray or tempt others ; Brotherly affection is not very hot in his breast, who rather than deny himself any little liberty, will contribute to the damnation of his Neighbour.

Remedies against Sensuality.

2. The Remedies against pleasure.

1. A loose and a *dissolute* spirit, a gay and inconsiderate temper, is that which commonly betrays us into excess and vanity, into softness and dotage ; and therefore Religion endeavours to possess our Souls with sobriety and awe, by the presence of a holy God, by the Judgment to come, by the value and preciousness of our Souls, and the manifold dangers and enemies they are *incompassed* by ; and therefore ingages us to pass the time of our sojourning in fear, to walk circumspectly, to be upon our guard, and watch always.

2. Because the Body is apt to grow wanton, it prescribes us *Watchings*, *Fasts*, and frequent *Prayers*, as the great Instruments that do most tame and mortifie it, and at the same time improve and exalt the mind.

Besides

Besides these, that I may at once conquer my Pleasures, and live pleasantly too, I have drawn these other Rules from Scripture.

1. I never frame to my self *Rich Idea's*, nor fancies I know not what Heaven in any object, but am content with an indifferent pleasure, and hope for no more than what befits mankind in this state on earth.

2. I train up my self to *endure hardship as a good Soldier of Jesus Christ*, by passing through some chosen difficulties by checking even a lawfull Passion, by calling off my humour from too much freedom, and by accustoming my outward man to endure restraints and discipline; and thus my temper grows strong, and my mind stanch and firm.

3. I observe that the Herd which aims at sensual Pleasure, either seldom meets it, (and what a misery is it to be damn'd for Lusts they never satisfied) or else they know not how to use it, or they are so soft and unmanly, they droop in every interval wherein they want it; and therefore I compose my self on the quite contrary, to meet a

Storm, and to Stem the Tide, and to arrive at my Port through boisterous Seas; and so a small Blast doth not move me, a great one doth not sink me, and a Calm, like an unexpected blessing, is received, the more *thankfully*, and us'd the more *moderately*.

4. I labour that my Conversation may be above, and I endeavour to look beyond this dark Horizon, and expect the breaking forth of the Sun of Righteousness. Sometimes in my Contemplation I die, and strip my self of all, and bid farewell to my dearest Friends, and my fancy wraps my Body in its winding Sheet, and wafts my Soul to God, and I enter as far as I can into Heaven, and I dwell there; and so the taste of another World, like the eating of *Manna*, makes my Palate too nice for the Garlick and Onions of *Egypt*.

Motives to conquer Pleasure. Sect. 3. The great motives of the Gospel, whereby we are encourag'd to despise worldly pleasures, are—

1. The *Love of God*, manifested in his loving us, and in the sending his own Son into the World for our sakes, that we might be the Sons of God; whence

whence the Apostles every where inferr,
*That the Love of God should constrain us
to obey him,* as dear Children, and Sons
of the most High God ; and consequent-
ly, not to walk as those who know not
God, in the lusts of the Flesh, and the
fashions of the World ; but being re-
newed in the spirit of our minds, to
please him in holiness and purity—
and the inexpressible *Love* of the *Blessed*
Jesus dying for us on the Cross , will
not suffer us to be guilty of such a base-
ness, as to betray him at the sollicitation
of a sensual Lust ; and that *Blessed*
Spirit of *Love* , which dwells in the
Children of Obedience, is quench'd and
griev'd by carnal Lusts, and therefore
they must deny all impurity, that the
Lord may delight to live amongst them.
Nothing will seem difficult to us, if we
but consider these things, the *majesty* of
God, and the *vanity* of Man, the *height*
of his *Love*, and *imperfection* of Man's
Obedience.

2. Our own *Excellency*. We are the
Temple of the *Holy Spirit* ; we are the
Children of the living *God*, the *Children*
of *Light*, the *Purchase* of the *Blood* of
Christ,

*Christ, the delight of God, and the care
of Angels, and shall we wallow in brus-
tish Lusts, like those who have no know-
ledge, no hopes?*

3. Our Reward here and hereafter, Joy,
and Peace, and Hope, do constantly dwell
in that Soul which works Righteousness,
and continues in Patience and Well-do-
ing; and can any of the fulsome pleasures
of the Body be compar'd to the calm and
transport of a holy Soul? and yet these
are but imperfect dawnings of an eter-
nal Day; there are things laid up for
those who love God, which the heart
cannot conceive, nor the tongue ex-
press; and these precious promises must
needs enable us to live above the cor-
ruption which is in the World through
Lust.—

So that now, though the Pleasures
which Christians are commanded to ren-
ounce were very full and satisfactory,
yet the love of God who enjoins this
Abstinence, the love of Jesus who suf-
fer'd for us, and the love of that Spirit
which is tender'd in the Gospel to pu-
rifie our minds, and fill them with de-
light and pleasure, would render our
compliance

compliance with these Commands very reasonable and easie ; and if we add the consideration of the *peace* and *satisfaction* which flow from an entire Mortification, and the glorious Promises which are annex'd to it, it will be almost impossible to resist the united force of such powerfull Arguments ; and how much more if we consider —

4. The *emptiness* and *vanity* of all those pleasures by which the sinner is insnar'd. The World hath nothing in it which is truly great and satisfactory ; its most exquisite entertainments are strangely *empty*, *mixt*, and *alloy'd*, and *fleeting*.

1. *Empty*. Every man's practice is a daily confession of this ; for how taking soever a pleasure may appear in *fancy* and *prospect*, yet 'tis common, that men soon disrelish what they enjoy, and *disdain* what they *possess* ; and if men daily change and contrive new Pleasures, is it not a plain confession of being dissatisfied with the old ? And what shall the poor Epicure doe, if Enjoyment it self prove fatal ? is it not an evident proof that the choice is foolish, the object empty,

empty, the faculties weak, and the
World a cheat: it were easie to prove
this, if I should run o'er particulars.
What is *Greatness*? it is so much nothing
I know not what it is, it is a slippery
height, it is a glorious slavery, a pretty
pageantry, and fantastick formality:
What is *Wealth*? this should not be reckon'd
as an Enjoyment, 'tis but the
mean to one. What is *Lust*, but an out-
rageous ferment of the blood, a sudden
mutiny of spirits? it is a sudden blaze
that flashes and then dies; the delicacy
and flavour of *Meats* and *Drinks* is
scarcely perceptible to most, it is so
much nothing; *Gaiety* of *Attire* is the
pleasure onely of Children and of Fools,
it is an *imaginary* prettiness.

Pleasure springing from Fancy consider'd.

But the truth on't is, pleasure here
below is not to be measur'd by the
weight and substance of the *Objects*, but
by the quickness and strength of *Fancy*
or *Imagination*; for 'tis with Men as
'tis with Children, 'tis not the *Rattle* or
the *Toy*, but 'tis the silliness of the fancy
which creates the pleasure; and there-
fore I'll consider this a little: If the *Ima-*
gination be childish, nice and fond, it
frames

frames and creates art and delicacy in the object, and begets passions tender, impotent and warm ; possession now (one would fancies) would certainly make one thus qualified happy ; but the mischief on't is, this strength of imagination belongs onely to a *raw unexperienc'd* sinner, who admires what he never try'd ; like a man come into a new World, the *strangeness* onely begets the wonder ; success will make him unhappy : when he hath try'd all objects, he will find all but *vanity* ; for as soon as Experience hath defeated him of the Imagination, it robs him of the Pleasure too, and a weather-beaten sinner derives his temptation only at last from custom, and he sins not so much because 'tis pleasant, as because he is us'd to doe so : This is the whole state of the case, Imagination and Fancy is the Pleasure; not Enjoyment ; and *that* cannot last without *this*, nor with it.

But besides, there is such an uneasiness accompanies a violent desire of any thing that it more than punisheth the pretty pleasures which fancy frames : hear a man essaying to discover what he feels.

feels, and he'll express his Passions, by flames and fevers, wounds and diseases, pleasing smarts, and killing pleasures, so sick are they of their Passions, and languish of their Desires, and die of Enjoyment; 'tis in all pleasures as in those of eating and drinking, the painfull appetites of hunger and thirst fore-run them, and feeding and drinking extinguish the appetite and pleasure too! This is the case of those who pretend to the greatest gallantry and wit in the choice and contrivance of their sins; what shall we think of those who drudge for baser metals and more dreggy course vices; the toilsome pleasures of Gluttony and Drunkenness, of Pride and Covetousnes, Faction and disobedience? Surely these are worse than vanity: the Soul of man must be light and airy, and silly, and unbalastèd, e'er it can please it self in the Imaginary Charms of Honour, and Command, and Beauty; but it must be base and earthly, degenerous and fortish, e'er it can be taken by these. Emptiness were enough to deterr our pursuit; but besides,

2. There

2. There is an alloy and mixture in this World which renders it very vain : The face of our fortunes here below is like that of waters, which the winds have curl'd and shrivel'd ; you can scarce discern the little smoothnesses for the numerous swellings : though Enjoyment be the sinners aim, it is the least part of his portion ; for besides the *cross accidents* which befall things, and the *inconstancy of humours* on which pleasure depends, the sinner himself lodges in his bosom a whole Legion of mutinous Lusts, which (though the Off-spring of the same Parent,) do oppose and destroy one another ; *Love* will not give way to the *Intrigues and Fatigue* of busie *Ambition*, nor *Ambition* stoop to the *softness and laziness* of *Love* ; *Covetousness* will not admit of the *waste and prodigality* of *Lust*, nor *Lust* comply with the *severities, and stinginess, and drudgery* of *Covetousness* ; a great Fortune's necessary to support great Sins, and yet our Sins lay waste our Fortune ; our Health is necessary to sensual Pleasure, and yet our sensual Pleasures undermine our Health : and thus the change of Things and Humours,

mours, and the contradiction of Lusts, makes the sinner's Life a strange mixture of *Desires* and *Disappointments*, of *Pursuits* and *Repentances*; and after all, suppose the best we can,

3. Our Pleasures are extreamly transient; the fashion of this world passeth away, every thing is in continual flux and change; and what pleases most, commonly takes wing first; for the height and perfection of every thing consists in such a point, that Nature seems rather to be still ascending to it, or declining from it, than standing still in it: But if the *World* were constant, we *ourselves* are not; our Temper daily alters, and our Fancies are seldom the same to day which they were yesterday; and how can our pleasures be constant, when though their Object continue lovely we cannot promise our selves that we can love them long?

We may therefore thus state our whole account, *Time* is but a moment to *Eternity*, *Life* but a moment in *Time*; and *Enjoyment* fills up but a very moment in *Life*: Lord, what a trifle and nothing is that which we preferr to an *Eternity of Bliss!* Thus

Thus I have consider'd the Nature of the World (which contains the Objects of Enjoyment;) to discover the Nature of Pleasure, it will be proper to consider,

2. Our own *Nature*, who enjoy: for this will give us farther light into the nature of sensual Pleasure! And here,

*Humane Na-
ture not form'd
for sensual
Pleasure.*

1. That Ray of *Reason* and *Wisdom* which is shed upon the Soul is a mere check and restraint to our Sensualities, and renders the pleasures of the Body in *Man* less pure and entire than in Children and Beasts: and he that hath any greatness or Wisdom in his mind, sins with the uneasiness that the Learned and the Great feel when they descend to play the fool; they scorn their own easiness, and are ashamed of their pleasures.

Our *Fancies* I have spoken to.

Our *Senses* are narrow, scanty things, they can enjoy but a *little*, and but for a *moment*; Let our Fortune be wide and large as it will, our enjoyment can be no larger than our *Senses*; we may if we please study variety of Objects, but all the while we onely *change* often and *possess* but little, for such is the na-

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ture of our scanty Organs, we can never enjoy a new pleasure without quitting the old, i. e. without losing as much as we gain. Our change of Humours is unaccountable, we are often full and froward, and know not why; and then like Children we quarrel with our toys, and tear and throw away the bables which we doted on.

Blessed God! that ever rational men should forfeit Heaven and incur a Hell for such a mixt uncertain state of empty pleasures as this! Could we like *Moses* climb some Mountain, and arrive within Ken of *Canaan*, with what regret, and shame, and scorn, should we look down upon the dull pleasures of Earth! Well doth the Holy Spirit describe the Slaves of Sin to be blind and sleepy, dead and sensless things; for we need but open our eyes, and see through all that paint and varnish that mocks and deludes the fancy; we need but be *Wise*, and we shall be *Holy* too, for if we but once understand the World we cannot but despise it.

5. *The consideration of what our sinfull pleasures stand us in; they are too*

too

too dear a purchase without the consideration of the Life to come. They distemper and decay the *Body*; they exhaust our Estates, and blast our Reputations; they are the Furies which haunt and disquiet us with *Desires* and *Jealousies*, *Despight*, and *Anger*, and *Vexation*. They dis sever the closest *V-
nions* and the dearest *Friendships*: They rob us of the more manly satisfactions of *doing Good*, of being *Wise* and *Learned*, of a *peacefull Conscience*, of a Soul *en-
lightned* (like *Moses's* face) by a daily converse with God, of *Meditations* grown sprightly and clearfull through a closer acquaintance with Heaven, and the Conscience of no guilt but what we have wept and prayed against: they bereave us, lastly, of the satisfaction of a fixt and steady *Choice*, of an assured and confident *Mind*, of obsequious and governable *Tempers*, of an even and orderly *Life*, and of the joys of glorious *Hopes* and a growing *Affurance*.

6. And yet after all, if we state the case between the *Good* and *Bad*, as to point of worldly Pleasure (according to the natural issue or consequence of

things from their causes) those possess *more* and *truer* pleasures than these; for whilst the Good onely *approve*, and the Bad *dote*, the Good *use*, and the Bad *abuse* the World; the Good are *prudent* in their choice, and *constant* and *orderly* in their deportment; the Bad are *blind* and *rash* in the former, and *light* and *disorderly* in the latter; it must needs follow, that the Good are the *Masters* of their Pleasures, the Bad the *Slaves*; that the Good meet with what they expect, because they have true notions of the World and things of it; but the Bad are defeated in their hopes, because they swell and enlarge their desires beyond all possibility of receiving satisfaction from an empty Creature; that the state of the Good is as well secured and settled as the nature of things below would admit; but that of the Wicked is confused and uncertain.

What a silly thing now is Impiety, and how wise and well contriv'd a thing is Religion! what can we desire more of God; if he give us a pleasant Fortune, he prescribes us Rules, how to enjoy it prudently; if he involve us in a cross one,

one, he supplies us pleasures and comforts, to sweeten it and support us.

The Prayer.

O Almighty God, and the kind and gracious Father of Mankind, I desire to adore and bless thee, that thou hast dealt thus by the poor Sons of Men; that thou hast secured our happiness by the Revelation of glorious Truths, by the encouragement of precious Promises, and by the sanction of wise Laws: Grant most gracious God, that I may be daily conversant in the most glorious Gospel to this end, that the pleasures of the World and the Flesh may not ensnare and entangle me; but that I may be enabled through thy Word and Spirit, to live above the corruptions of Lust; to possess my vessel in purity and honour, and to enjoy thy blessings moderately and thankfully, that I may at last be received into an Eternity of Rest, and Peace, and Joy, through Jesus Christ my Lord.

C H A P. II.

*Of pain Considered as a temptation to sin.
First of imaginary, secondly of real e-
vils.*

BY Pain, I mean every thing which is troublesome: All troubles may be reduc'd under two Heads, *Imaginary*, and *Real* ones; by *Real*, I mean such as do actually injure the mind or bodies of men; by *Imaginary*, I mean such as could have no influence at all upon Men, but through the assistance of prejudice or fancy. I'll begin with the latter; and in speaking to both, I must premise this, that I will not bring home every Argument by a close Application (for then this very Head would swell into a vast proportion) but content myself with proving, That there is no pain which can be a just warrant for sin, because the Gospel hath provided such Remedies as may render it supportable, and such Rewards as may countervail all our sufferings: *There is no Temptation which befalls us, but what is com-*

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mon to men, and God is faithfull, and will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, i.e. (above the strengths he allows us) but will with the temptation, make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.

1. Of Imaginary evils. There are many things which are not really harsh and unsufferable in themselves, but they become such, because it is the custom of the World to think them so: For example, a shallow Fortune (but sufficient for the necessary comforts of life) an inglorious solitude, or privacy, the Opinions of others concerning us; these things have no real Influence, either upon mind or body; they cannot make the Soul less rational, nor the Body less healthy; a Man may be happy here, and go to Heaven afterwards without much fame or wealth.

That all the misery that is deriv'd from these things, depends upon Opinion is plain, because some have made that Poverty, Retirement and Contempt their choice, which is such a Bug-bear to others; and so the same thing, which is one's affliction, becomes another's

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another's *pleasure*: So that it is plain, fancy gives us the wound, not the things themselves; or else if misery were an inseparable Companion to the things themselves, it were impossible that Content should ever sojourn in Cells or Cottages, or ever be a stranger to Wealth and Honour. Of this sort of troubles are all those other passions which are enkindled in us by the impressions of things from without; for even *Beauty, Grandeur, Gaiety, &c.* though in their own nature innocent things, are sharpen'd and arm'd by our fancies with trouble and danger to our repose—

Now though it be true, that as the cold or heat of Climates are things innocent enough to bodies inur'd to them, and yet are fatal to others; so here, though all temptations of the World are in themselves harmless things, yet 'tis plain, that upon Beings so dispos'd and temper'd as *ours* are they make dangerous impressions: Therefore in the Gospel of Christ, the remedies prescrib'd by him, do all tend to the removal of these ill dispositions,
and

and the reforming our false Opinions,
and the suppressing our inclinations :

As,

1. Our first care must be to frame *The Care of our Opinions* of things by the Rule of *imaginary Evils*.
Faith, and to root out all false Notions of things; to this end the holy Gospel doth every where insinuate the *emptiness*, the *transitoriness*, the *uncertainty* of all things here below; the *Excellency* of Holiness and Righteousness, and the little tendency which the things of the World have to promote it: And lastly, the *Weight* and *Eternity* of happiness in another World; all which contribute to our happiness, as they arm us against the impressions of outward objects, by possessing us with a *contempt* of them, and with desires far greater, and nobler, and contradictory to those other.

2. The Gospel of Christ enjoyns us to shun and fly temptations all that we can; we are to block up all the Avenues by which the World may make its approaches, the lustfull must not gaze upon Beauty, nor the ambitious on Greatness; and because sin usually gains

by

by Parley, we are carefully to shun the least appearance of evil,—not to entertain thoughts which either revive the Idea's of past pleasure, or tend to form in us the Fancy and Desire of new.

3. We are to labour earnestly to mortifie all the lusts of the Body by Fasting, and Watching, and Prayer, and a constant temperance, encourag'd to it by the example of our Lord, and a whole Cloud of Witnesses gone to Heaven before us, and the promise of rewards annexed to the carefull performance of, and unweary'd perseverance in these duties. And,

4. The assistance of the mighty Spirit of God, and a certain Victory is promis'd to him who thus contends; and unless men will willingly deprive themselves of such an Auxiliary by not contending, or not begging him of Christ, or grieving him, it is not to be doubted but we shall obtain him, and together with him sufficient strength, and glory, honour, and immortality, will be the end of our warfare.

These are the means, these are the Motives, this is the assistance which our blessed

blessed Jesus hath prescrib'd and offer'd us, by which we may be enabled to live above those miseries which they are intangled in who obey not his Gospel, and defeat those Airy Apparitions which would fright us into sin.

Therefore in whatever condition I am, I will still ask, What would my blessed Saviour have done, or said, or thought in this case? What opinion of, or value for this or that thing, or condition, hath God? and I shall find, that no condition can make me truly miserable, but that wherein I cannot *love God*, I cannot *pray*, or cannot do *good*: For if I can, I am both great and happy. *If a man love me, Joh. 14. 23. my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* Happy abode! What can my Soul desire more? I cannot think my self *mean*, who am his *Favourite*, nor can I be *poor*, who possess that God whose presence makes up Heaven! My God, How happy should I be, could I be content to make thee alone my Portion; but because I cannot be content to be *poor* and *contemptible*, because I seek my comforts from without,

out, because I am not at leisure to entertain thee onely, therefore thou dost not dwell so ravishingly with me.

But I will seek thee more diligently hereafter; vain world adieu, I have No-

bler hopes than thou canst feed, and I shall have comforts thou canst not rob me of! How can I be miserable, if I be fill'd with joy and peace through believing? or if I abound with hope through the power of the Holy Ghost? I can think of that shine of Glory with which I shall be once invested, and then suffer these Rags with patience, till my Nuptials come, and my new Suits be made; I can love this contempt and poverty, because it shall make my Crown more weighty, and my being more glorious.

What is it, O my Soul, for which I complain? What is it that I have lost; Estate, Reputation? It is affirm'd by the Spirit of God concerning all sensual pleasures in general, That *they war against the Soul*, 1 Pet. 2. 11; in particular concerning wealth, *How hardly shall a rich man enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, Matt. 19. 23. concerning vain-glory, and *how can they believe who receive the* praise

praise of Men? Am I then so much troubled, because my difficulties in the way to Heaven are diminished, my Chains grown lighter, and mine Enemies fewer; because my ties to, or dependences on the World are few, and consequently my distractions in, and diversions from holy duties, are the fewer? I have no fears, no cares, no contrivances, no jealousies, because I have no concern in it. How near Heaven am I grown, who am thus remov'd from Earth? And being in this condition, I am not expos'd to the changes of the World, I have nothing wherein ill fortune can attaque or wound me. This state is not so contemptible, which is thus full of peace, wherein I may possess my self, and need not spend the greater portions of my life in things which *fame or greatness* requires of me, not *inclination or choice*.

The Prayer.

Lord teach me to form my Opinions according to the light of thy Gospel; to guard my Soul against all the impressions of the World, and Flesh; to mortifie the

the inbred Inclinations of my Body to Lust, and to fix my mind so upon the things that are not seen, that when-ever vain fears assault me from without, they may find the House guarded by the strongest Man. Amen, Amen.

S E C T. II.

Of real Evils, whereof some are unavoidable, others onely incident to this life, and though common to most, yet not necessary to all.

of Evils Necessary and Unavoidable.

THERE are some evils so natural and constant Appendages to this state of Mortality and Imperfection, that unless men can cease to think them Evils, they cannot be happy. For example, a Friend dies, or proves false, and such like; or I am to die my self, i. e. things happen in their natural course, and as I ought to expect them.—I may as well quarrel with God, that he did not create me an Angel, and that my first Station was not in the Courts of Heaven, as complain of this. Now though it be true, that an Evil, is not the less an Evil because it is

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incurable, or unavoidable, or universal, yet I must from hence inferr, that the wise Man ought to be better provided and confirm'd against such, and that he gains no small step towards happiness, who can divest these Evils of their affrighting shapes, which the Man shall in a great measure doe, who shall expect nothing more in this state than what is proper to it; and then can no more be aggrieved at Death, Chance, Folly, &c. than at the imperfection of our intellectual capacities, the meanness of our natural inclinations, and the frailties of our bodies, for those other are the effects of these, and yet no Man thinks himself miserable, because he doth not understand as much as God does; because, being flesh and bloud, he doth not will as nobly as Angels; And why should he think it amiss or hard, that being mortal, any thing should die, or being imprudent or passionate, any thing should act so?

It is highly reasonable, that he who Created us out of nothing, should Create us as he pleas'd; for he who was not bound to doe any thing, cannot be blam'd for doing so much. — — —

But

Their Cure.

But Christianity rests not here, it provides a Remedy for all these Evils.

1. By the discovery of the Souls Immortality, of the Bodies Resurrection, and of Glorious Rewards which shall Crown those who suffer contentedly and patiently.

2. By the discovery of Objects fitted for the affections of an Immortal Soul; noble and great enough to fill the biggest capacities, and most inlarg'd desires; such are God, and Jesus Christ, and the glories of another life, which are unalterable and unchangeable; so that the happiness and pleasure of a Christian Soul depends not upon these uncertain things below, but upon those things which are above.

3. Since these misfortunes are such as are unavoidable in this life, they can be no temptation to sin, because we cannot avoid them by sinning; and they who endeavour to drown their sense of worldly afflictions, by an indulgence in any sins, doe worse than those who kill themselves to get rid of some uneasy passion; the very Remedy is the worst of mischiefs.

But

But to proceed, as to pains which are *Of Evils common, though common to,* though not unavoidable in *not unavoidable.* this life, I cannot chuse but see there are *dable.* a sort of Men who suffer *bravely*; and yet I must confess they *suffer*, and though they are patient, cease not to be miserable; these are the onely things which I could ever think so unhappy as to deserve my pity; and yet it will not be reasonable to sin for the avoiding such sufferings as these; for though Religion cannot remove all sense of pain, and passion, (for then this World would be ~~000~~) a Heaven; and the Scripture is plain, that no affliction for the present is joi-
ous; and if they were not Fiery Trials, they would be no temptations,) yet it supplies all the ease and comfort which such a state is capable of, and such as is enough to make it supportable: Therefore I first premise these two Propositions.

I. That no Temptation befalls us but what is common to Men: That a whole Cloud of Witnesses is gone before us in the severest and bloudiest paths; and therefore that there is no state which is not supportable by Divine Assistance,
and Sane, and noble, and

and may not be pass'd through without such an ill demeanour as may forfeit our everlasting happiness.

2. That there is no condition so miserable, but it is capable of some mixture of comforts; let us for an Example, in matter of fact, regard the Apostle of our Lord, 2 Cor. 6. *In affliction, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings,* and yet the Cloud had a bright as well as dark side; for, v. 10. *Though dying, yet behold we live, though chasten'd, yet not kill'd, though sorrowfull, yet always rejoicing, though having nothing, yet possessing all things.*

Now it matters not I confess, as to entire happiness, whether Scale, of sorrow or comfort, outweighs, because to entire happiness it is requir'd, that both parts of us, as well Body as Soul, enjoy good; yet it will become a wise Man to get as much ease as he can, and when the Sun is set, not to despise a Candle: — And this proves thus much, that no man can be necessitated to sin, since a man can triumph over such afflictions as these.

Having

Having premis'd thus much, I go on to consider, that all Real Evils attack the *Mind*, or the *Body*; for what assaults onely Reputation, or Estate, or other Possessions, I reckon amongst *Imaginary Evils*; and indeed they are none at all, unless they make their passage thorough these to the Mind or Body.—As to the Body, I know not how to prescribe to it; What are Arguments to the Stone, or Rhetorick to the Gout? but herein,

1. Either the pain is moderate, or exquisite; if moderate, it is supportable; if exquisite, it cannot be lasting: we are somewhat beholding to the frailty and weakness of our Nature, for this in a great degree prevents our unhappiness, a small pain cannot make us miserable, and a great one will not let us continue so, for it crushes it self as well as us, by its own weight, and our Nature dies and droops under the pain which it cannot suffer; though for my part, I must confess, were it not for Christianity, it would be but a poor comfort to me, that my pain is great enough to butcher me, and make an

end of me in a moment, that those miseries which dispers'd and stragling I could tolerably well encounter, having combin'd and united all their forces, overthrow me in a moment; for men do not usually think themselves happy, because they do not meet with miseries which are too big for, and therefore not incident to their Nature; but miserable, if they meet with all the utmost they are capable of bearing; yet through the assistance of Christianity, this consideration becomes matter of much comfort, for by the Revelation of Life and Immortality, the state of pain, by being momentany, is as much diversified to us, and those who knew no other life, as the Red Sea to *Israel* and *Egypt*, when the one onely pass'd through it, and the other perish'd in it; and it is a mighty Obligation to persevere in Holines, maugre all the opposition of pain and trouble, because this pain is not worthy to be compar'd with the glory which shall be reveal'd.

2. If the affliction be too big for our strengths, we are reasonably to expect supernatural recruits; for since nothing befalls

befalls the good but by Divine Permission, and in order to their good, I cannot see why, if God will have our lives & Martyrdom, we may not reasonably expect the assistance he allowed the Primitive Martyrs; for without it we cannot suffer as we ought to do, and consequently it cannot tend to our good.

3. I am to enquire, what the Soul can contribute towards making our bodily pain more easie, and our burthen more light; That it can doe somewhat, is evident from examples of fact, as was shew'd in the second Premise. I'll take notice farther onely of two sorts of men as a proof of this truth (though I might urge a hundred examples of the power of the Mind, in sustaining the pains of the Body) the ambitious and the covetous, men which daily impose upon themselves cruelties which would make up a very formidable burthen, if laid on by Providence.— A vain Man for an empty name starves in a Camp, lies on the ground till his poor limbs grow stiff and clayie, as the Earth their Bed; and after all charges through

smoak and bloud to meet his death, or comes off trailing a shatter'd Limb about the Field, and is content with praise, for the loss of a Leg or Arm. The covetous man lives upon Eggs or Roots, cloathes himself with Sackcloath almost, despises Fame and Honour, Friendship and Pleasure too, and all this that he may die rich; and if neither of these think themselves miserable, I do not know why any other should? Such is the strength of Whimsie, or of Passion. Why Faith and Reason cannot doe as much, I cannot see, because Reason is stronger than Whimsie, and Faith calls in the aids of Imagination and Passion to boot. — Let it be granted then, that the mind can assist us somewhat in our sufferings; and then let us enquire what Christianity prescribes as Remedies against *Pain*, to enable us to conquer it.

1. It discovers to us the true end of all afflictions, God's glory, and our happiness, for assuring us that all things are governed by a wise, powerfull and gracious God, who doth not afflict the Children of men out of any peevish humour, it must needs follow, that his chastisements

ments must be design'd to excellent ends and purposes ; that all shall work together for the best to them who love God ; And why should we not submit willingly to the Conducts of a wise God ? Or why should not we suffer that condition contentedly, which promotes most our own happiness ? Why should we be dissatisfied with a more boisterous wind, which drives us more speedily into our Port ? If his glory be the main end, and that be as much or more promoted by our *patience* in adversity, as thankfulness in prosperity, and our own Sanctification no less advanc'd, is it not just matter of comfort rather than repining ?

2. It promises a weight of infinite glory which these light afflictions work for us ; so that that condition cannot be miserable which is full of the most glorious hopes, and those too at a little distance, for this life is but a moment.

3. It calls us to the just consideration of our own Merits, and having displaid a Scheme of our own sins, it afterwards assures us, that we are punish'd here, that we may not be condemn'd hereafter : Both which considerations beget in us

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Humility and Love, and both render all sufferings easie; for as Pride makes every little disgrace intolerable, and magnifies every affront, so Humility changes the face of the whole, and represents the state, as very answerable to our merits, very reasonable and just.

4. It proposes us the examples of God's dearest Children, and of the holy Jesus himself, and invites us to weigh their shame and glory, their sorrows and their Crowns together; to consider their patience, and the love of God, and so to strive earnestly, beholding their end.

5. It assures us of strength in proportion to our necessities, that God who looks on, and sees the Combat, will supply us with force answerable to the danger; and then what matter how violent our afflictions are?

The sum of all is, Afflictions are intolerable, because we our selves sharpen their stings, and warm their poison; because we neglect or slight our own strengths, we do not reason, believe and pray: I shall thankfully bless God for my afflictions, if all the while I suffer I am

am washing off a sin, and labouring for a Crown, and untwisting my self from the World, and dressing my Soul for Heaven; I will thank God, that he hath cast me into a condition void of those snares which soften and sensualize the mind; to become sensual is a worse fate, than to be scorn'd, or poor, for that is a change of our very humanity, and draws after it the contempt of Heaven; this is a change onely of outward circumstances, and is fear'd onely by the Vain and Gay, and scorn'd by fools; for to be *truly humble*, is to be *truly honourable*, and to *suffer Christianly*, is the infallible Character of a great mind. Lord, I know that I am here but a Stranger and a Pilgrim, and I will not propose to my self Rest and Luscious Pleasures, I am now in a state of Warfare, and I expect not my ease, and a Kingdom, till I have vanquish'd: I am the Servant of the Holy Jesus, and I will take up my Cross and follow him; and if he calls me to walk upon the Waters, I cannot believe that he will let me perish.

I have in this discourse of Pleasure and Pain had an eye to two things, not onely

onely to shew, that there can be no reasonable ground for a Temptation to Sin in either, but also to demonstrate the Excellency of the Christian Principles, by shewing how they serve to all the ends and necessities of this mortal life, to regulate our Pleasures, and alleviate our Pains; for else it had been enough for me to have said, that there is no reason to quit an Eternity of pleasure for a moment's; and that no pain can be equal to that of Hell; and therefore, that no man can be seduced from his duty by either Pleasure or Pain, if he do really believe the Gospel.

Of Troubles of Mind.

The Evils which disquiet the Minds of men (as far as concerns this Head of Pain) may be reduced to two.

1. Doubting or uncertainty, when we have no sure knowledge of matters of the greatest moment.

2. Amazement and fear proceeding from guilt, and the apprehension of future vengeance;

Doubting concerning Points important, now removed by the Gospel.

The first of these is now sufficiently remov'd by the Gospel of Christ, which hath brought Life and Immortality to Light, and discover'd all those glorious and

and important Truths which relate to our Eternal Welfare, and our belief is herein founded upon Divine Revelation, for God bore Witness to the Authors of this Gospel by Miracles, and by his holy Spirit, by the Resurrection of Christ from the Dead, &c. and such is the purity and excellency of this holy Doctrine, that no man who believes a God, can chuse but see that an obedience to such holy Precepts must be acceptable to him.

The second proceeds from the Conscience of our sins, and a dread of the <sup>Despair rem-
ved.</sup> Divine Nature, either of which, if they drive man into despair, must necessarily plunge him into profaneness and immorality, or into melancholy and madness.

The Gospel hath remov'd both these Evils.

1. By the glad tidings of Reconciliation through the Blood of Christ, whom he hath set forth to be a Propitiation for the sins of all who will believe and repent, to deliver them who through fear of Death were all their life time subject to bondage, *Heb. 2. 15.*

2. By

2. By a clear Revelation of the goodness and mercifulnes of the Divine Nature, which courts our return, beseeches us to be reconcil'd to him, and waits for an opportunity to shew Mercy: Whence the Gospel Characters of him now, are that of a *Father*, the *God of Hope*, the *God of Comfort* and *Consolation*, and *Mercies*, and *Love*; so that the minds of Christians are fill'd with joy and peace in believing, and abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. From all which it follows, that no man can have any temptation to sin, from any rational suggestions, from any rational fears or doubts; for this discovery of the Divine Nature, and this Death of Christ, invites men to Holiness, by the Obligations of Divine Love, and their own interest: But of this I have treated before.

The Prayer, nowe settall

O Thou God of Hope, of Love and Mercy! thou art become exceeding gracious to thy people, thou hast turn'd away our Captivity and refresh'd us by an Eternal Redemption; though this World

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be a Wilderness compar'd with the other, yet thou bere feedest us with Manna; those bright Truths, and that glorious Assistance which are able to scatter all the melancholy Clouds of Afflictions and Sorrow which gather upon the face of this present life: Lord, grant that I may make this use of them, to raise my self above the weakness and passions of this present life, that the trial of my Faith may be to praise and glory, and to my everlasting felicity in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen, Amen, blessed Jesus.

C H A P. III.

Of Temptations not reducible to pain and pleasure. Infidelity. Late repentance. The littleness of a sin; with remedies of each. The Conclusion of this part made up of several directions fit to fortifie the mind against all sort of Temptations in General.

THough these (*Pain and Pleasure*) are the great Magazines from whence the Devil brings forth all his Arms

Arms and Temptations, yet there are some peculiar ways whereby he doth insnare and intangle us; for he doth not assault us openly, unless he hath before corrupted the Guards: he deals with us as with *Eve*, *Te shall not surely die*; for if he had told her plainly, The fruit is fair and pleasant, 'tis worth your while to die for it, certainly she would have bid open defiance to him and scorn'd the temptation. Thus he deals with us, he cheats and deludes us into vain hopes, and false presumptions; we wound our selves to death, and yet flatter our selves with life; we forfeit our Innocence, and yet impudently promise our selves a Heaven.

I will therefore conclude this Part with a particular Chapter concerning Temptations,—which are mostly

Infidelity.

I. *Infidelity.* This is the general way the Devil takes to destroy the Souls of men, and to seduce them from their Duty; for it will necessarily follow, that it is the most notorious folly imaginable to oppose our inclinations, or to deny our selves any thing, if there be no reward for holy Souls; and therefore against this,

this, we are exhorted to take up the Shield of Faith, *Eph. 6. 16*, to possess our hearts with a firm belief of the truth of the Gospel of Christ. For this Reason, the Evangelists and Apostles are so full and frequent in the proof of the Fundamentals of Christianity, as the Resurrection, &c. and of this one Proposition; That Jesus is the Son of God; proving it from his Power and Holiness, and Wisdom, and his Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven, and from the descent of his Spirit upon his Followers in such a publick manner; and I heartily wish that all that profess the Name of Christ would

1. Lay seriously to heart the clearness and evidence of these proofs, and not perfunctorily pass over all the passages of the Gospel, which are written on purpose that we may believe, without weighing them.
2. That they would examine themselves what are the first Motives which prompt them to Infidelity; *Do they not love darkness, because their deeds are evil?* And do they not rather wish the Gospel false, than believe it so?
3. That

3. That they would not stifle their Reason, and refuse Audience to those Pleas the Gospel offers in its own defence, when they cannot answer them; do not think it is enough to divert your Conscience a while from its clamours and importunity, but satisfie it, and do not rest till you bring stronger proofs against the truth of the Gospel than those are which Patronize it; for he that will eject a receiv'd truth out of its possession, must doe it by a greater force and clearness of Arguments, than those are which establish'd it; and being firmly perswaded of this, that Jesuſ is the Son of God, &c. it will be hard for any temptation to get much ground upon your minds; and therefore it were well and wisely done, every morning to repeat our Creed soberly, musingly, and thoughtfully, and confirm our ſelves in the belief of it.

Deferring Repentance.

Sect. 2. *Late Repentance.* But why should I resolve to amend after this ſin, rather than before it? Are my Accounts too little, that I would add this to the Score before I state them? Or hath my God and Saviour deserved ſo little of me,

me, that I think a short life too much to be spent in his Service, though he should give me a Heaven? Or am I sure that I shall have a keener appetite to Holiness after I have tasted the lusciousness of sin? Or will sin be the more easily put off, the more habitual it is grown? Or do I hope to find God the more mercifull, the more I provoke him? Or if the sin be now too sweet, too taking to be rejected (which is in truth the reason) how do I know it will not be so always? Or if my body decay, how shall I know when it is weakness or repentance, whether a change in my temper or my mind? Or how do I know that some other sin will not grow up in its stead? not only Youth, but every quarter of our life hath some baits or other ripe, and in season; And how know I what limits the Almighty hath prefixt to his patience? he cuts off some sooner than some, and the measure of one man's Iniquities is finish'd before another's? Or how know I that God will allow me more strength, who makes so ill an use of this? O let us remember our selves, and sin no more; we are blind, and do not see our danger;

ger; the hazard we run of hardning our hearts, and forfeiting God's Grace, and provoking his wrath, and being cut off in a moment, when we think not of it,

*This Section is
to be understood
of deliberate
Sin, not of un-
avoidable frail-
ties.*

Sect. 3. It is a little sin; he is a very ill Casuist, who deliberating upon a Temptation, forms that foolish distinction of Mortal and Venial sins, for he proceeds upon a supposition which is wholly false; i. e. That there are some sins which do not interrupt the Love of God; God cannot approve of Sin in the least degree however: But if, as some think, this Veniality or pardonableness is not founded in the nature of the Sins themselves, but in the good Will and Kindness of God; it will behove him, who will act securely, to prove, That God hath anywhere declar'd, that he will not be displeased with him for those sins which he hath nevertheless forbidden upon pain of eternal wrath; or if this be Nonsense, let him prove that God will not be angry with him for that very sin he is about to commit. In few words, the true use of distinguishing sins by their several degrees

grees of mortality or pardonableness, is not to direct men how to sin safely, or how to chuse what sins they may commit, but to direct the man who hath committed them, concerning the nature and degrees of his repentance; for in plain terms, no sin can be justly call'd little, which we deliberate and consult about, sin receiving its aggravation not so much from the matter of the sin it self, as from the *strength* of our *passion*, and the *Excellency* of that God whose Law it is a Violation of; for though the instance of the sin may be a little one, yet if we sin as far as we think we safely may, it is a foul argument of the *baser-
ness* of our temper, and the *imperfection* of our love; like *Judas*, we betray our Saviour for a contemptible Piece; a Smile, a Word, prevails more than the love and bounty of my Creatour; And do we not then deserve to perish? If we will be so foolish to chuse thus, why may not God be so just as to punish us?

2. That sin is generally most *Fatal*, which looks most *Innocent*; for the Devil is never more apt to insinuate him-
self,

self, than when transform'd, he appears in a shape of *Innocence*: Let but a man allow himself the utmost liberty he thinks lawfull, and he shall be soon betray'd into what's unlawfull; and he that shall indulge himself in any little vanity, shall be shrewdly tempted into greater, besides the strange danger of growing sensual, and undiscerning; and besides that, the least sin, even in the sense of those who most favour the distinction, grows mortal by frequent Commission—Therefore in opposition to this temptation, we are taught

The Cure.

1. To grow in Grace, and to go on to perfection, as being a slate of the greatest security; and this requires the most carefull and circumspect walking, the most intire denial of our own wills and affections; all which is inconsistent with the admission of the most Venial sin; For how can it consist with an ardent love of God to chuse to displease him a little? Whatever a little trifling injury may seem to an unconcerned Spectator, yet if it pass between two who mutually love, it will seem great to both.

2. We

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2. We are exhorted to shun, not only every sin, but every appearance of it; not to dwell within the Confines or Suburbs of Temptations; not to act the least thing which we but doubt may be unlawfull, and therefore surely nothing that we know is so; not to dispute nicely what we may without danger doe, but to doe all that is Noble and Praiseworthy.

3. When we have done all, we are but unprofitable servants, and therefore let us, who I am confident shall never doe all we ought, endeavour to doe all we can; when we have watch'd and when we have pray'd, when we have contended, and when we have fought, when we have done all we can, there will be still sins enough to exercise the mercy and goodness of God; sins secret which we know not of, sins of sudden surreptions, imperfections mixt with our holy duties, and innumerable evil motions, which, unless the Bloud of Jesus, our own Repentance, and the mercies of God intervene, would unavoidably damn us.

*The Tempta-
tion of Friend-
ship and Soci-
ety.*

The Remedy.

Sect. 4. When these ways fail, he sets upon us by others Engines; by our Friends; by some or other who have an Ascendant over us; and it is not seldom seen, that the *Friends* of our Bosoms are the greatest *Enemies* of our Souls: For the truth is, Friendship is the dearest and most pleasant thing in the World; whence it often happens, that men of the most excellent tempers, and the most generous Principles, have been often induc'd by Friendship to doe or suffer, what neither their proper pleasure nor pain could ever have engag'd them to; and in all honest and allowable instances, to preferre a Friend before our selves, is, if not a Duty, yet certainly an Heroick and commendable action. But here, as to our purpose in hand, the Case is thus to be stated, Whether I am to obey God or my Friend; whether I am to serve the interest of my own Soul, or comply with a Friend's peccant humour, to the manifest hazard of my own Soul, and his. The case thus stated, is, I think, too plain to contain in it any doubt or Controversie at all; for our Obligation

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on to God, who hath more powerfully indear'd himself to us, supersedes all Obligations, in this case, to our Friend; nay, Friendship it self obliges us rather to *advice and reproof*, than compliance; it being the true duty of affection to doe not what is most *pleasant*, but most *usefull* for our Friend: And I must say farther, that friendship is, or ought to be founded in *Vertue*; and therefore without the guilt of Lightness, or inconstancy, I may *lawfully* as far renounce my *Friend*, as he doth his *Innocence*; for he is become quite another thing, and hath nothing of that Charm and Grace which made me love him: In this case it is enough to answer as our Saviour did to the Devil, Thus and thus 'tis written; it is not lawfull for me to doe so, and therefore I will not, for Vertue needs no excuse; if they can act a Crime without blushing, I see no reason why I should be ashamed to own a Vertue; and if they think it unreasonable that we should deny them the liberty of enjoying themselves, I think it much more so, that they should refuse us the liberty of denying our selves,

selves.—And this way of plain dealing will be every way more usefull to your self and Brother, than disguises and excuses: For he that shifts off his friends opportunity to sin, not by a flat denial, but a *pretence*, seems to confess that he denies compliance, not out of *Conscience*, but convenience; and so exposes himself to a fresh assault, because his Friend looks upon him as Conquerable, and onely waits for an opportunity wherein he may attack him in better circumstances, and a better temper: all which would be avoided by a plain and hearty refusal.

2. This way, in common reason, must prove most usefull to our Brother, for how do we know but the influence of our Friendship, by the assistance of God's Grace, may gain upon him, or open disallowance may at least startle him into a serious consideration, which will be enough to defeat him of his Folly; and the example of our Virtue may incourage his imitation, by letting him see that Virtue is *easie* as well as *lovely*—Against all devices of Satan and Temptations in general, I lay down

down these three or four Considerations.

1. That be the Excuse or Imposture General Considerations against all sorts of Temptations.
as cunningly wove as it can, it matters not ; be the excuse what it will, I am to consider this, that by hearkening to such devices of Satan, that croud which now throngs Hell, descended into those horrible Regions ; never any man yet sinn'd with a design or persuasion to be damn'd for it, but he contriv'd his excuse as subtilly, and provided a reserve as safe as possibly he could, and yet they miscarried, God cut them off suddenly, or sin grew too strong, and they too weak.

2. It is easier to conquer a Lust, than to satisfie it ; the Ambitious may grow content sooner than great ; the Covetous may sooner moderate their desires, than satisfie them ; the unclean may more easily gain a chaste Spirit, than satisfie the ravings of a wandring Lust ; for a man's Frame grows tractable and governable by wholesome Reasonings, and sound Advice ; Heavenly, by Prayers and Meditations : But if you listen to a wanton suggestion, it will kindle into Lust ; and Lust,

Lust, if encourag'd, will flame into a Passion ; and our passions will grow savage and imperious, if fed and pamper'd, and then no greatness can glut Ambition, no enjoyments satiate a Lust : And shall we chuse a harder way which leads to an Eternal ruine, before an easie way which guides us to happiness ?

3. It ought heedfully to be consider'd, that temptations do not gain upon any by strength of Argument, but by importunity and prepossession ; no man that weighs the things temporal and eternal, can preferr in his judgment those to these, but those are seen, and these are not ; those are continually with us, and they carry their Arguments and Rhetorick in their looks, and every sense of us is constantly beset and applied ; and so by insensible degrees they insinuate, and then possess us, and captive us : The best way therefore to secure our selves, is either first to cut off all opportunities of being tempted, by retirement and retreat from the World ; or secondly, to countermine the World by an equal diligence, making our Meditations and Prayers more frequent than our

our entertainments of sense ; that so the Soul may be call'd off from the things without, to meditate upon the things above ; as often at least as Gaiety and Luxury invite it out.

4. As there are objects of vanity, so there are too in the world objects that advise, and reprove us, such as distress and sickness ; that raise our thoughts, such as the works of God's hand, and all others are capable of a good Observation ; as for example, what is an evident vanity, may be the matter of our pity, rather than love ; Feasts and Musick may suggest the Almighty's goodness, and lead us to the consideration of a better state ; and if we use this method, we shall reap a double benefit ; first, we shall avoid the insinuations to sin visible in outward objects ; and secondly, we shall have our Souls stor'd with excellent thoughts.

5. Never slacken or abate thy diligence, though thou hast arriv'd at a great degree of Piety, and hast mortified the flesh, and subdued the World, there is no security on this side Heaven ; many good men fall, the best may ; and

and therefore let him that stands take heed lest he fall; for what will be the Issue, God onely knows. The Night is far spent, the Day is at hand; and wilt thou let go the Victory, when thou hast broke the main strength of the Battel? Thou art almost above fears, and above struglings; thy life hastens away, and thy task diminishes, and wilt thou shipwreck in the Port? Thou art just going into the Arms of thy Lord, and wilt thou now suffer thy Beauty to fade, and thy Glories to languish? The Bridegroom is just at the door, and wilt thou now suffer thy Lamp to go out?

The Prayer.

Eternal God, who seest that I walk upon Snares, and in the midst of Enemies, give me the Spirit of Fear, Humility and Watchfulness, that I may walk circumspectly, passing the time of my sojourning here in fear; encompass me with the whole Armbur of Faith, that I may be able to fight a good fight, to finish my course with joy, and to have confidence at the appearance of my Lord Jesus Christ. Amen, Amen, blessed God.

Practical

Practical Christianity.

PART IV.

Of three general instruments of Holiness,
or preservatives against Sin; viz.
Sacraments, Prayers and Fasting.

C H A P. I.

Sacraments, Prayer and Fasting may be considered in a threefold respect. 1. As parts of Divine Worship, or of Holiness in general. 2. As Instruments of advancing Holiness. 3. As Remedies and Antidotes against Temptations. In each of which relations I will consider each of them a little.

I. Of Baptism.

Consider'd in the first sence of the three, it contains a Solemn Profession of the Christian Faith, and actual Renunciation of those Enemies of Christianity,

stianity, the *World*, the *Flesh*, and the *Devil*, and a *lifting ones self* into the service and obedience of Christ.

And because I cannot think that there is any essential part in the System of Christianity merely *Ceremonial*, I cannot think, but that besides the *Admission* into the Church, which is the Body of Christ, and consequently a *Title* to all the glorious privileges of its Members, both which we derive from Baptism; our blessed Saviour doth endow the Person Baptized with power from on high to perform all those great engagements he takes upon him; as will appear to any one who shall consider,

1. The *Nature* of Christianity, which doth alway annex a Grace to the external Mean, or Instrument; or,
2. The *great things* spoken of this Sacrament; or,
3. The *value* all understanding Christians have had for it, or the effects which follow'd it, when practis'd in the Infancy of the Church; and I humbly conceive this to be the sense of the Church of *England*, which supposes the things signified by the outward Ceremony

ny of Baptism, to be a *Death unto Sin,*
and a *New Birth unto Righteousness.*

But whatever become of this Notion, it is certain, that it is a strange Obligation to a Holy Life, and a remedy against Sin, as being a most solemn engagement of our selves to the obedience of Christ; from which we cannot start back, without drawing upon our selves the guilt and punishment of Perjury, and forfeiting all those advantages we partake of by it; and I wish all would lay this to heart, who plead the Obligations of Civility and Friendship, Custom, and Fashion, in defence of their sins, as if any trifling Ceremony were sufficient to supersede our Obligation to Christ, and acquit us of that guilt which the Breach of the most sacred Covenant brings upon us.

The Prayer.

Blessed and holy Saviour, give me grace to remember my Baptismal Vow, to remember that I am a sworn Enemy to the World, the Flesh, and the Devil; and unable me to fight the good fight

fight of Faith under thy Banner the Cross.
Let me have no truce, entertain no friend-
ship with thine and my Enemies ; Let
them flatter me, if they will, with smiles
and promises, I am sure they mean no-
thing to me but death and ruin. How
shall any fantastick Obligations cancel my
duty to thee, resulting from so solemn a
Covenant ? In vain doth the World dis-
guise its temptations under the forms of
Civility and Honour ; I know no Civili-
ty which can oblige me to renounce my
Vows, no Honour that can excuse my
Perjury ; in vain doth the World assault
me by Greatness, and Wealth, and Glory ;
these are the very things I resolved a-
gainst when I took up the Cross of my Cru-
cified Saviour in my Baptism : Grant, O
blessed Lord, that I may have mortified af-
fections, and a Victorious Faith, an hum-
ble meek Spirit, and glorious Hopes,
that after this troublesome life is ended,
I may rest with thee in Everlasting Glory.
Amen, Amen.

C H A P.

C H A P. II.

Of the Lord's Supper.

THe Supper of our Lord may fall under the same forms of Consideration which Baptism did; that is, it may be consider'd,

1. As a part of Divine Worship.
2. As an Instrument of Holiness.
3. As a Remedy against Temptation.

I will look upon it briefly under each of these Notions, and herein I will guide my self by that incomparable Office of this Church, which hath admirably express'd and reduc'd to a method the whole mind of the Gospel relating to this matter; for which I have often bless'd God, whilst I beheld and reverenc'd that Primitive plainness, and truly Christian Spirit visible in it.

First then, our Lord's Supper consider'd as an act, or part of Religious Worship or Holiness, contains in it these four things.

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1. An

1. An humble acknowledgment of our sins.
2. A devout Profession of our Faith in Christ, that we are the Disciples of a crucified Saviour, and expect Salvation by no other way, than that Sacrifice of his Body and Blood offer'd upon the Cross.
3. A solemn Oblation of most humble and hearty thanks to God for this inestimable benefit, his bestowing his Son upon us to die for us; and to our Master and onely Saviour Christ, for his exceeding great love in dying for us.
4. A most solemn Oblation of our selves, Souls and Bodies, to be a holy, lively, and acceptable Sacrifice unto God: so that this Sacrament consists of a whole Constellation of Graces, *Repentance, Faith, Hope, Charity.* It is a nearer approach into the presence of God, and more solemn exercise of the Graces of the Gospel; and this gives a very fair account of the reason of its frequent practice, for nothing can be
Secondly, A more effectual Instrument of Holiness, upon these and the following accounts.

i. That

1. That the preparation necessary as a condition of our worthy Reception, doth awaken our Souls, and refresh all our Graces, and mortifie all our sensual Lusts, and draws us nearer to Heaven; and the necessity of such a preparation as the Church-office prescribes, appears from hence, that Repentance, and Faith, and Charity, are absolutely necessary to enable a man to exert those acts (before mention'd) which constitute this Sacrament, consider'd as a part of Divine Worship; and therefore to approach that holy Table without a Soul so qualified, is to affront and mock the Majesty of Heaven.

2. That the exercise of our Graces in receiving, doth encrease and improve them; that Act of humble *Adoration* and profound *Prostration* of our selves before God under a sense of his Purity and Majesty, and our sinfulness and meanness; that lively *Act of Faith*, whereby the Soul doth profess its firm belief of, and dependence upon the Death and Passion of its dear Lord and Saviour for Salvation; that *Love* whereby the Soul offers its praises, and its self

a Sacrifice to God, do leave such lively and lasting impressions upon mens minds, as are not quickly nor easily effac'd ; and the Soul, by the delight it finds in exerting these Graces, is inkndled with a desire of repeating the same Acts.

3. That the Saerament it self hath a natural tendency to promote Holines : 1. By its sensible *Representations* of a Crucified Saviour, the Symbols themselves being fit to bring into our minds the Pain and Sufferings of our dear Lord and Master. 2. By that *inward Grace* (inseparable from the worthy Reception of it) bestow'd upon us to refresh and strengthen our Souls, to root and confirm our Faith, to inflame our Love and perfect our Hopes. 3. By being a *Pledge and Assurance* to us of the pardon of our sins through the Bloud of Christ.

4. That it is a new and repeated Engagement of our selves to the service of Christ, to an obedience to his Laws, and a Renunciation of those Enemies of the Christian, the *World*, the *Flesh*, and the *Devil*. From all this it is easie to inferr,

3. That

3. That it is a strong Fence and Antidote against Temptations; for these fresh impressions of our Saviour's love, the new strengths of Divine Grace, the vigour of a new and solemn Engagement to Obedience, fill the Soul with a holy zeal against Sin, and with a glorious contempt of sensual pleasures.

The Prayer.

AND now, O my God, what should make me so prodigally venturous of my own safety, as to neglect the frequent use of this holy Sacrament! have I not need frequently to examine my self? Are not thy Graces apt to wither and decay unless thus water'd and refresh'd? Doth not my converse with the World, and my communication with Flesh and Bloud, render it necessary for me to renew my resolutions against them as often as I can? Or is there not a holy delight in the exercise of all this, that surpasses all the pleasures of a sensual life? and is it not a Sacrifice that my Lord and Saviour is highly pleas'd with? And is it not reasonable that I shou'd oblige him,

who died for me, with this frequent acknowledgment of his infinite love evidec'd in his Death? Pardon me, O my God, that I have been so ungratefull to thee, so senseless of my own welfare and advantage! for the time to come, I will delight in this holy Communion, I will often offer up myself a Sacrifice to thee, and profess my Faith in a Crucified Saviour; and there beg thy assistance and conduct through the difficult paths of this present life: And, O my God, accept thou of my addresses and praises, through thine infinite Mercies, and the Blood of Christ. Amen.

C H A P. III.

Of Prayer.

PRAYER may be consider'd under those three Heads I before mention'd: And,

I. *As a part of Holiness.* It is an acknowledgment of God's being our God; a confession of His Majesty, and our meannets, being a solemn Adoration

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tion and *Worship* of him ; 'tis a Sacrifice of *praise* to him ; 'tis an act of *Humiliation*, and of *Repentance*, and of *Faith*, and *Reliance* upon him : And from hence we may inferr, what preparation of the Soul is necessary to a right discharge of this Duty ; that *ex tempore* Addresses are the most improper, and the most unwelcome to God ; for these are at best but imagin'd to raise those passions or dispositions in the Soul, which ought to be presuppos'd in it before-hand, to the rendring of our Prayers acceptable ; for we draw near in Prayer to offer up a Sacrifice which we had prepar'd before : And we may Secondly, conclude, That whatever the *gifts* of Prayer be, the *Spirit* of Prayer is that which doth dispose and prepare the mind by such qualities as are fit to exert the Acts I named before ; and I am apt to think, that a Soul which thus prepar'd, and fixing it self in the immediate presence of God, dwells with an inward Devotion in those acts of Adoration and Praise, Humiliation and Faith, without expressing these actings of the mind in words (I speak of pri-

vate prayer) doth, in St. Paul's sense, *Rom. 8. 26.* pray by the Spirit; and consequently, in publick, those Prayers are most spiritual, which share most of this preparation.

2. *As an Instrument of Holiness:* it doth exercise all our graces, and refresh and improve them by exercising; the breathings of the Divine Spirit (which is in an extraordinary manner assistant in this holy exercise) fill the minds of men with *Joy*, and *Peace*, and *Hope*, which confirms them in their Christian Warfare, and makes them disrelish all the pleasures of a sinfull life. Lastly, Prayer hath extraordinary promises annexed to it, of receiving whatsoever we ask with Faith, *Matt. 7. 7.* *Ask, and it shall be given to you.*

3. *It is an Antidote against Temptation;* for it possesses the Soul with an *Awe* of the Divine Majesty, with a sense of his unspeakable *love*, and with a *horror* against sin, whilst we enumerate his benefits, and our sins, with all their aggravating circumstances: And certainly no man can be so sensless as to repeat those sins which he did just now bemoan.

bemoan and abhor, renounce and resolve against before God; nor will it be easie for him to fall, who comes forth forewarn'd and arm'd to encounter a Temptation. Lastly, Prayer convinces a man of the loveliness and happiness of a holy life, for he finds that his Peace and reliance grows up or decays together with his Virtue.

If I did Pray earnestly and often, how humble, how *holy*, how *heavenly* and *exalted* would my Soul be? With what glorious Notions of the Divine Majesty, what dreadfull apprehensions of sin, what an unquenchable thirst of Holiness, what fears and jealousies of the World and Flesh, would my Spirit be possess'd? And what a mighty influence would all this have upon my Conversation? How humbly, how warily, how fervently should I walk?

But when I do not pray often, or with this care and preparation, How *lazy* and *careless* is my life? How *dim* and *imperfect* my concep-tions? How *flat* and *tasteless* my re-lish of spiritual things? How doth a worldly sensual temper grow and en-crease

crease upon me, and the Divine Life within droop and languish !

The Prayer.

O Therefore my God give me grace to be frequent and fervent in Prayer, assist me by thy Spirit to dress and prepare my Soul for this more solemn approach to thee ; and then I shall experience this to be the high way of Commerce with Heaven, I shall feel the wind blowing upon the Garden of my heart, and the Spices flowing forth ; I shall feel the Spirit fanning that Spark of holy life it kindled into a flame ; and I shall feel my self transported and ascending up above this vain world, and all the allurements of it : O therefore grant me, O my God, thy holy Spirit, that I may pray with understanding and fervency, with a prepar'd and a devout Soul ; that my prayer may not be the sacrifice of fools, and turn'd into sin, but an acceptable Sacrifice to thee, an Instrument of Holiness, and a Guard against sin, enabling me to fight the good fight of Faith, that I may receive an everlasting Crown ; and all for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Chap.

C H A P. IV.

Of Fasting.

I should now add something concerning Fasting, which the Universal practice of the Church, besides our Saviour's Rules prescrib'd concerning it, do plainly suppose to be a Duty of Christianity; but yet such an one as is a Free-will offering, and so dependent of various circumstances, that the Practice of it cannot be fixt by particular Rules; and therefore as I did on purpose omit speaking to it, when I had a fair offer (under that Head, the means to obtain Temperance, consider'd as a habit in the mind) so now I will onely consider it very briefly.

1. Whoever shall consider the constant practice of the devoutest men, the Nature of this Body we are cloathed with, or the frequent sins to which the lusts of it have betray'd us, will discern Reason enough to invite him to this Duty, either in order to our Mortification,

on, and our future security, or as an act of affliction and Revenge for our past faults: Therefore,

2. Whoever totally neglects this Duty, upon pretence of the ill effects it hath upon either Body or Mind, ought well to be assur'd, that the uneasiness of the one or other, be not the effect of a wanton and carnal Mind, rather than of the temper of the Body; and that his Body will admit of no degrees of this Duty, otherwise he is oblig'd according to his capacity.

3. To Fasting must be join'd Alms and Prayer, and Vain glory must be separated from it; without the former it is insignificant, with the latter it is a sin: But if any just Reasons disable any man to give Alms, or to devote the day entirely to Spiritual Exercise, I cannot yet think but that Fasting may be us'd as an act of affliction, provided it be consecrated to God by a holy intention at least.

The

The Prayer.

Glorious God, I see in what a world I live, and what a Body this Soul of mine doth dwell in; how little kindles those Lusts which blast the Innocence of my Soul, and destroy my peace; I remember how often I have behav'd my self unbeseeming a Child of God, onely to gratifie the inclinations of an ungovernable Body; Enable me therefore so to mortifie and subdue it, that I may enjoy an entire Peace and Conquest; so to humble and afflict it, that my revenge may testifie the sorrow I feel for my misdemeanours; and accept thou my sorrow, to the atonement of my sins through the Bloud of Christ. Amen.

The Conclusion.

I Am now earnestly to beseech the Reader, to reflect seriously upon this whole Discourse; and consider, whether the Christian Religion be not a System of most glorious, delightfull and important Truths; whether any Princi-

Principles can raise Man to such an entire *Conquest* o'er the world and himself; whether Holiness doth not transform him into a great and a glorious thing; whether any knowledge can create in him so perfect a *Peace*, and so undisturb'd a *joy*; whether there be any thing besides Religion, can make a man spurn fawning *pleasures*, and out-brave his *fears*; whether there be any thing which would turn the world into so much Paradise, and secure our *peace* and *interest* on such unshaken bottoms, and lead on the whole Train of a publick or a private life in such a safe and pleasant method. What then? Art thou fond of Ruine? or hath damnation any charm in it? that thou wilt still resolve to persevere in such a manifest contradiction to the Laws of the blessed Jesus? Wilt thou suffer thy Soul to be miserable here through those numerous lusts, which are the incessant torments of it? And canst thou think of abandoning all the hopes of a glorious immortality?

Or dost thou indeed look upon the Gospel of Christ, as cunningly devised *Fables*,

Fables, and readest these kind of Arguings, as onely wise and politick harangues? Surely so much Holines confirm'd by so many Miracles, must needs witness its Divine Authority; and if thou wouldest but try thy selfe the practice of it, thou wouldest feel its *divine* principle in the *Life* and the *Joys* of the Spirit!

But I am persuaded, the greater part of mankind, cannot chuse but in despite of Inclination, acknowledge the *truth* of the Gospel, and the *Excellency* of Vertue; and confess that their vices are the effect, not of their *choice*, but *weakness*: Blessed God! What account then will these men give of their Disobedience, at that day when Christ shall come to render Vengeance to all, who have not obeyed his Gospel, when they shall be put in mind of the prevalent motives made use of to endear Holiness to them, and of the mighty Assistance of the Divine Spirit which was offer'd them towards enabling them to live well; when they shall see, (as a perfect Refutation of all such excuses) so many Millions (I hope) of blessed Saints,

Saints, who, though liable to the *same Passion*, and encompass'd by the *same Temptations*, did yet conquer all, and entred into Life thorough the *Strait Gate*.

But if this little Treatise should light into the hands of a perfect Atheist, or at least of one who laughs at every particular Sect of Religion; to such a one I address these last lines, and I beseech him to allow them so much consideration as he would to any other thing which pretended to so much concernment and importance.

¶ 1. If there be a God, Nature seems to dictate, That he is a Rewarder of those that seek him; and forgets not the Wise and Vertuous, neither in Life nor Death (and *Men*, as wise and rational Creatures, are his peculiar Offspring, and more near related to him:) and on this Argument *Socrates* in his *Apology* founded his hopes of another life; an argument much a kin to that of our Saviour, *God is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, now God is not the God of the Dead, but of the Living*; at the smartness and clear-

clearness of which arguing the people were astonish'd. And

If there be another *Life, Vertue and Goodness* must needs be the proper qualities to recommend and endear us to the God who presides in that other World; (for I can never fancies a British and irrational Deity.)

If there be no God (which is impossible) it is a thing impossible to be prov'd; and therefore an Atheist can never possess his Soul in any Rest and Peace; and besides, if there be none, the belief and practice of this Religion of Christianity (as I'll make appear presently) can do no man any harm; and what madness then is it, not to take the safest side in a matter of this dear concernment?

2. In behalf of Christianity in particular, I beseech such a one to consider,

That if those Miracles and Proofs of Divine Authority, which the Gospel relates, were true and real, then the matter is beyond dispute.

If they were not, I would fain see some probable account, how Christiani-

ty could so generally obtain, in despite of all the disadvantages it was to encounter; having neither *Interest*, nor *Pleasure*, nor *Force*, to countenance it against the establish'd *Superstitions* and *Vices* of the Age.

That it concern'd them of *Judæa*, which was the Scene of our Saviour's Actions, to have given the World a manifest account of the Imposture, and so have provided for the security of *Judaism*, which was subverted by it.

That the wisest and most Religious Sects amongst both Jew and Gentile, were quickly swallowed up into Christianity.

That those early days were the most fit for a confutation of the Proofs on which Christianity is bottom'd, as being most nearly conjoin'd to the times of our Saviour's and his Apostles actions; and therefore capable of being easily inform'd, and yet we find no such thing done; which must needs suppose the Worlde either monstrously ignorant, or stupid, and senseless, not only of their secular, but eternal interest: The former is utterly false, and the latter absurd; there-

therefore it is more than probable, no such confutation could be form'd.

That the *Wisdom* and *Majesty*, the *Purity* and *Holiness*, the *Mysteries* and *Prophecies* of it are so many tracks of Divine Glory, which bespeak God its Author; it being very improbable, that e'er the Devil should be o^r set against himself, as to promote that Holiness, which is so contradictory to his nature; and though he should have blended it with speculative errors, that cannot be thought a mischief able to satisfie him for all the good it hath done in the world; nor would such a design favour enough of the malice of Hell, for surely God will never make a good man eternally miserable, for a speculative Errour into which his *Humility* and *Resignation* to God, and such strong probabilities (not to say more) betray'd him.

But suppose (against all reason) that it were Fictitious, What can any man suffer by the belief of these Principles? certainly they tend to make us like God, and there is no article which reflects any disparagement upon the Divine Nature,

but discovers it to the World, in the greatest and the loveliest Characters; and therefore unavoidably, if any Religion, then this, will secure our future Life.

As to the present, if our Life be clouded and o'ercast by afflictions, these Principles alone can support us under them, because these only are substantial grounds of courage or content: if our life be calm and fair, no man enjoys it with a more constant and untroubled satisfaction than the Religious, for Religion only crowns our outward properties with a firm peace and content within.

And yet all the clamour rais'd against Religion is this, that it enviously intrenches upon the pleasures of Nature, and wheedles us out of the possession of present pleasures, by the deceitfull promises of future—

In answer, I would fain know of any the most fortunate Epicure, (for I confess I have never been lucky enough to discover any such state) whether there be any enjoyment rich as *Fancy* and ravishing as *Doteage*, if there be,

of

of what *constancy* and *unmixt purity* it is ; for if it be not fixt and steady, then a constant, cheerful life, as free from uneasie fears, desires and troubles, and repentances, as from the taste of such luscious Meals, is surely to be preferr'd before a few fortunate Minutes, of a life in the general disorder'd and troubl'd : or whether accounts being stated rightly, we may not safely conclude, that there is no such thing as such an enjoyment, much less any permanent state of it : and then,

I may easily defend Religion as to this point ; for then it is but reasonable that our desires should be calm and temperate, and that we should sit down content with such easie and obvious pleasures as suit this state of imperfection and child-hood ; and if so, What harm can Christianity do Men ? (as God ex-postulates with his People, *Testifie against me, wherein have I wronged thee ?*) It doth not forbid us to *like*, but *dote* ; it doth not forbid us to *enjoy* the World, but it forbids us to *equal* it with *Heaven*.

And when it hath once fixt the limits of worldly happiness aright, it is so far from

from driving us out of the reach of it, that it is the only path to it; we sail within those Sea-marks, which if we slight we dash on Rocks and Sands; for

Answer me,

Are the *Faculties of our Soul* rendred more uncapable of Happiness, because cultivated and improv'd, employ'd to useful and ingenious purposes, not lost on trifles? Are our *Senses* less subtile and judicious, because the Body is preserv'd in an entire and vigorous health by temperance and employment, and content of mind?

As to the *Objects* of our affections: Is a *Good Estate* less usefull or less creditable by being spent temperately and Charitably? Is *Greatness* the less firm, or the less glorious, because its Basis is *Virtue*? Is a *Beauty* the less taking, because innocent and *Vertuous*? Of all the pleasures of humane Life, I have always thought *Friendship* the dearest, and certainly *sense* as well as *wit*, true *courage*, and *honour* and *constancy*, (the product of Religion) as well as the *Accomplishments* of Nature and gentile Education, must go to make

it perfect and delight full : when any are endear'd by a *generous goodness*, by an *innocent* and *undesigning* passion, by a combination of virtues and a confederacy of rational delights and glorious hopes ; I am confident no debauch'd mind can ever fansie any thing so charming and romantick ; and this Friendship can never be attained or preserved unless it be founded in and cherished by the great principles and virtues of religion ; and if this be the case, if this be all that Religion doth ; that is, if it be onely a wise method to happiness, set on foot by the *goodness*, and contriv'd by the *Wisdom* of God , I cannot discover any just ground of quarrel against it : I cannot see how the sinner can get clear off from these Arguments ; remember then 'tis a desingenious kind of confidence to return onely raillery for answer to Arguments ; and to think a loud laughter a sufficient confutation of important truths : *Be not deceived, God will not be mocked;* a day is coming, when the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open, when God will argue his own cause in a flaming vengeance ; And then what a miserable

Tragedy,

Tragedy will thy Mirth and Pleasure,
the Sinner and his World end in? What
astonishment and dread will seize upon
every Soul which hath hardened it self
against the Gospel of Christ? How mi-
serably fool'd and cheated, will all the
gay and jolly Sinners find themselves?
But glory, honour and peace will be the
portion of every one, who worketh
righteousness.

The Prayer.

O Thou holy Spirit of God, thou di-
vine principle of a divine life, re-
move all blindness, hardness and impos-
tence from off the hearts of all those who
read the truths of the Gospel of Christ,
and grant that they may receive the
word of Christ with an entire Humility and
pure affections, and bring forth the fruit
of it in their Conversation; that when
the winds blow, and the rain descends, and
the floods beat, they may be like houses
built upon a rock, and stand unsحرك in
the great day of Judgment. Amen. Ar-
men.

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